

857. 12. 23
SOME
2
ACCOUNT

OF THE
Holy *Life* and *Death*
OF
Mr. HENRY GEARING,
Late Citizen of London :

Who departed this Life *January* the
4th, 1693. Aged 61.

With the *Trial* and *Character* of a
Real Christian, collected out of
his Papers, for the Examination
of himself: From which several
other Particulars are added, for
the *Instruction, Encouragement,* and
Imitation of Christians.

L O N D O N;

Printed by J. D. for John Lawrence, at
the Angel in the Poultry. 1694.

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
AND
ZOOLOGY
OF THE
CITY OF LONDON

IN THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
AND
ZOOLOGY
OF THE
CITY OF LONDON

IN THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
AND
ZOOLOGY
OF THE
CITY OF LONDON

IN THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
AND
ZOOLOGY
OF THE
CITY OF LONDON

IN THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
AND
ZOOLOGY
OF THE
CITY OF LONDON

IN THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
AND
ZOOLOGY
OF THE
CITY OF LONDON

IN THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
AND
ZOOLOGY
OF THE
CITY OF LONDON

To my Respected Friends,

Mrs. HANNAH GEARING,
The Widow,

A N D

Mrs. *Mary Fisher,*
Mrs. *Eliz. Billingshurst,*
Mrs. *Ann Roberts,*

The Children of

Mr. HENRY GEARING.

WHen God hath taken any
of our holy Relations from
us, who were ready for the Heavenly
A 2 Man's

iv The Dedication.

Mansions, made meet for the Rest,
Peace and Joy of the upper, better
World, we should rejoice in the Grace
of God towards them: with Thanks-
fulness owning our Mercy, that they
lived so long to glorify God here,
and be useful to us and others. It
would be very unreasonable to
lament their Departure, out of any
pretence of our Affection to them.
And no less unkind to wish that
for our sakes they should not have
died, or should return from Pa-
radise to our sinful, troublesome
World. But we know they shall
not come to us; the only way
therefore to meet them with Com-
fort, is to remember their In-
structions, follow their Counsels, and
imitate their Faith and Holiness,
their Integrity and Self-denial, and
resolved

The Dedication.

resolved, persevering Obedience to
God.

The Prayers and Pattern of such
an Husband, and of such a Fa-
ther as yours, is a Blessing for
which God expects your Praises. That
in the former Relation, it was en-
joyed but a little while; long enough
however to make you, Madam, bless
God for him, and unfeignedly to
value and honour his Memory
while you live. May his Grace sup-
ply, and help you to improve this
Breach.

To you his Children I most
earnestly recommend the following
Papers: God and Man will expect
your profiting by them more than
others. You know how much you

were upon his Heart: you know his Example and manner of Life, and how you ought to walk and please God: You have seen the Beauty of Practical Godliness exemplified; you know how fervently he was wont to wrestle with God in Prayer for you: you know with what daily Pains and Care, Wisdom, Faithfulness and Love he endeavoured your Salvation; rejoicing in any good Success thereof, but hardly able to support under the Burden of the contrary Fears, as to any of those whom God had given him. O dread to think that either of you, or any of yours, should meet him at the Day of Judgment, and be rejected of Christ among the Workers of Iniquity, when both your Parents shall be own'd, honour'd, and rewarded

rewarded among the Faithful. An ordinary Hell will not be Punishment enough for the Children of such Parents, if you miscarry, and fall short of Heaven!

But if you seek after God with your whole Heart, desiring to please and serve him, who was the God of your Fathers for many Generations; if you are humble and prayerfull, and prize the Blessing of the Covenant, keep within the Bond of it, and mind the Duty of it; your Way is prepared, your Acceptance is assured, there is a Prospekt of more Grace and Consolation for you and yours, as a double Blessing promised to the Childrens Children of such as fear the Lord. That you may experience this, and in or-

viii The Dedication.

der to it, resolve, that your Father's God shall be your God for ever and ever, is the hearty Prayer of

Your Affectionate Friend,

and Servant in the Gospel,

London,

Feb. 16.

1691.

JOHN SHOWER.

A S H O R T
A C C O U N T

Of the Holy LIFE of
Mr. Henry Gearing, &c.

IF there be Joy in Heaven among the Angels, and the blessed Inhabitants Above, upon the Conversion of a Sinner; we may reckon there is so from time to time, upon the Addition to their Number of any such, who by the Grace of God are made meet for the Heavenly State, and Life. Among many others of late deceased, Mr. *H. G.* was doubtless a very welcome Person.

The too frequent Flattery of Funeral-Orations, I know is a common Objection, against speaking or writing any thing of the Dead: because many are commended, whose Names are written in the Dust, and deserve to perish with their own Dung.

But the Memory of the Just shall however be blessed ; their Death is precious, and their Examples useful to all who knew them, and may be so to many others. It is not, I confess, of every good Man or Woman that dieth, that we can speak such things, as we may to the just Commendation of some. Neither is it fit to publish all the Good we can of every Body ; because it may be they had some Blemishes that will make the other incredible, or lessen its Use. But Persons of eminent Grace and Holiness, are the choicest Works of God, the richest Ornaments, the most precious Jewels, that can be shown : for the meanest Saint is incomparably more noble and honourable than the greatest Personages in the World, that are Slaves of Sin, and Enemies to God. But as one Star differs from another in Glory, there are some more lively Images of God, and who better imitate the Pattern of Christ ; some Vessels of Mercy filled with Grace above their Fellows : Of such as these we ought to speak, to the Glory of Divine Grace. There is an attractive Influence in their Pattern ; some good Savour and Impression may be left by the serious Perusal of their Lives and Character. Divers have dated their first Con-

Conversion from reading, or hearing such Relations.

But as many an upright Christian, whose Funeral-Sermon I may be call'd to preach, will come far short of the Spirit and Practice of Mr. G. so I resolve to speak more sparingly of the Dead in such Discourses, lest I raise the Expectation of the like, where I cannot conscionably perform it. And on the same account I forbear the mention of some things which *He* desired of me, and I complied with, because I would not encourage others to desire the like.

I hope the publishing of such Examples, may be one means to confute, or silence the *Atheism* of the present Age, as if there were no Reality in Religion; that it is meer Notion and Talk, or a Cover for Hypocrisy. An exemplary visible Piety is proper to confute such Cavils, baffle such Prejudices, and convince the Minds of Men, and bring them secretly to wish that they themselves were such. It is certain, the unsutable Lives of those who profess Religion, hath greatly stumbled and hardened many in their Profaneness: Some of no ordinary Parts or Education, under Convictions of Sin, and Fears of Hell upon a Death-bed, have told me, that the wicked Lives of such as pretended

to Religion, had more hindered their Seriousness than all the Quirks and Subtilties, or bold Attempts of such as would overthrow the Principles of Christianity.

Besides, serious well-disposed Christians will be encouraged by the Example and Commendation of such, after whose Copy they desire to write. Thanks be to God, there are *not a few*, even in this Age, of whose *Exemplary Lives* there are divers Passages fit to be published: And tho it would be endless to write all their Lives, yet now and then to set forth a bright Example may be of singular Advantage. Such as knew this, or the other Person in particular, and were themselves Witnesses of the Truth of several things related, will be more apt to be influenced by such an Account, than by the like, or greater things related of others, who have been dead many Years ago, or their Lives written by such who never personally were acquainted with them. And by such Examples we see that strict and serious Religion is possible; and that if your Hearts are set to please God, it is not to be despaired of.

If I can by the following Narrative, excite any to value and improve their *Time* better, whereof he was so very
choice

choice and careful: If I can blow up any Coal of that Divine Fervor and Zeal to God, that warm'd his Heart; if I can but provoke any to mend their Pace, by considering how short they come of what he was, and did, I shall think I did well to publish it.

However, as the Word of God delivered in the Holy Scriptures, and dispensed in the Ministry thereof, hath divers and contrary Effects upon different Subjects, from which God will raise his own Glory; so will it be with this Relation. But if the Reader gain no Advantage by the perusing of it, he must blame himself for not considering, and applying it with suitable Reflections. For he may here find the Description of a *Real Christian, a true Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed.*

I am not very solicitous to avow my Integrity as to the Truth of every thing related; because, besides what I have asserted of him from my own Knowledg, all that have lived in his Family, and many others of his Acquaintance in this City, will readily subscribe to the Truth of the rest: Tho the best Discovery of him is what is transcribed from *his own Papers*. For who can know the inward State and Frame of another Man's Soul, but by his

own

own Declaration of it some way or other? It must be opened some way or other by himself, or it cannot be published and made known to others. The inmost Secrets of a Man's Heart towards God cannot be so well known by the strictest Observation of Other Men.

What I have gathered out of his own Manuscripts, is published without altering any thing material in the Expressions; unless here and there one word, where the Phrase was dark, or subject to Ambiguity. If in some things there seems not that Exactness which some Readers would desire, it ought be considered, that there are other Readers to whom they may be more sutable, who are not to be neglected. And as to his manner of expressing of himself, you must remember he was a plain Citizen, and one who had no need of a polish'd Stile, or any Advantages to gain it. Besides, what he wrote was only for the Comfort of his own Soul; and, if he had any farther Eye, for the use of those of his own Family; whose Love and Regard to him might imprint deeper on their Minds and Hearts what was done by him, tho with less Accuracy, than by another Hand.

After

After all, I here pretend not to lessen the Honour and Commendation of any other holy Persons lately deceased, or of any such yet living: for, in substance, the Character of one will sute the Hearts and Lives of all the rest. But all upright Christians do not walk with God in their daily Course, as did this *holy Man*. I may call him so, tho I do not say he was *perfect*: For a greater than he, *Elias*, was subject to like Passions and Infirmities with us. The best Saints on Earth are but imperfectly sanctified, their Knowledge is imperfect, their Love imperfect, their Self-denial imperfect; they have Reminders of Corruption, and according to the different Temperament of their Bodies, Circumstances and Conditions of Life, they are subject to many Weaknesses, and are sensible of them. But the Grace they receive by constant Prayer, and Dependance, and the Care and Watchfulness they are enabled to use over their Hearts, and Words, and Senses, and against the occasions of Sin, preserves them from any great Transgressions, and quickly recovers them from lesser ones.

I therefore hope I shall not be blamed, for not mentioning his Infirmities and Failings, because I know not how the
Reader's

Reader's Benefit and Advantage would be thereby promoted: It hath been observed to this purpose, that the Vertues, the Graces, the Perfections of our Brethren set before our View, may be proper to nourish our Humility, suppress our Pride, and invite our Imitation: But to divulge their Faults would rather further our Security, and advance our Self-conceit. And as to this excellent Person, his Watchfulness and Temperance, his Devotion and Diligence, his Mortification and Zeal for doing good, argued a very great Purity of Mind and Heart; and his careful Improvement of his Time left little Vacancy for Temptation to fill up. No very great Faults beure could dwell with such strict Examination of himself every day, as he continued to use till within *four days* of his Death. But that being all written in *Short-hand*, what might have been from thence added to his Character, or transcribed for the Imitation, or Instruction of others, is wholly lost. This in the general will be owned by those who were best acquainted with him, that, human Infirmities and Imperfections excepted, his Life was one even Thread of serious Godliness, from Morning to Night, from the beginning of the Week, and Month, and Year, to the

the Life of Mr. H. Gearing. xvii

the end, in all Relations, in all Companies, and in all Affairs.

He was born at Leachlad in Gloucestershire, and baptized there, March the 5th, An. 1632. His Father, Mr. Henry Gearing, was a Shop-keeper, or Mercer in that Town; and, for his extraordinary Prudence and Piety, respected, honoured, and loved by Persons of all Perswasions. There are not wanting those now living, who can say of the Father's House, what several know to be true of the Son's, That it was a Nursery of Religion, a little Temple of God, and they thank God they were ever cast under that Roof. It was the Experience of * one,

whose holy End in the way of Righteousness is a Crown of Glory, with whom our

* My Honoured Friend, Mr. Joshua Gearing, Sen.

Mr. Gearing served his Apprenticeship: He in his younger Years boarded in his Father's House at Leachlad, and reckons the Example of his holy Life to have been a singular Blessing to him in his Youth. His pious Father died of a Consumption, when this Son was about the Age of thirteen. As did his Unkle, Mr. Simon Gearing, his Father's elder Brother, about six Years after. His Mother, Mrs. Ann Gearing, was likewise an eminent Christian, and died at Ramsberry in Wiltshire,

January

January the 8th, 1669, and was there buried.

But to return to him of whom I am now further to speak. It pleased God to begin very early with him, before he came to London, when he was about twelve or thirteen Years old. God doth often so bless a good Education of Children; and would oftner do it, if Parents would be careful to do their Duty in this particular with Wisdom and Faithfulness. There were such Discoveries, as I am informed, of his serious Godliness in his Youth, as were observed by many, to the Admiration of the Grace of God. He began betimes to seek after God and Christ: These were his best Days, and he comfortably found him whom his Soul loved. The Pleasure, the Advantage, the Success and Comfort of Devotedness to God in our Youth, is beyond all Expression.

When he came to London, God directed and settled him as an Apprentice with his Cousin Mr. Joshua Gearing, already mentioned, where he had the Advantages of a Religious Family, and constantly attended the serious, affectionate Ministry of Mr. Jer. Nalton, whose Name and Memory is still precious with many in this City: God was pleased to bless his Preaching to his effectual Conver-

the Life of Mr. H. Gearing. xix

Conversion, or rather to nourish and increase the Seeds of Grace planted before. He always thought he could never speak with Honour and Affection enough of Mr. Nalton, whom God had made so useful to his Soul: he would frequently, to his dying day, mention with what powerful Impressions on his Conscience his Sermons were accompanied, how he thought himself in a Corner of Heaven under his Ministry; that he could many times have wished to have gone directly to Heaven from the Place of Publick Worship: such a Presence and Power of the Divine Spirit did attend the Gospel-Ministrations. May the Residue of this Spirit be more plentifully poured out on the Ministers of Christ in this City and Nation, for the like Effects on the Souls of Men!

He hath often spoken and writ, how sweet and advantagious a Season for Religion the time of his Apprenticeship was: What Heavenly Thoughts and Meditations he frequently had in the Shop, and behind the Counter. He hath often professed, that by reason of his Freedom at that time from Worldly Cares and Business, it was the best time he ever enjoyed for God and his Soul in his whole Life. He had then nothing else to do, but to serve God and please his Master, who was the more pleased with him, for loving and pleasing, and
serving

serving God. The Conversation he had in Heaven by Ejaculatory Prayer, while he followed his Master's Business, he hath often since reflected on with Joy and Thanks, saying, he would not for all the World, but be able to remember what he then enjoyed; for he never had such lively, comfortable, uninterrupted Communion with God afterwards. Tho in his after-course he continued in this Evidence of a Heavenly Mind and Heart, frequently to lift up his Soul to God, whatever Business he was about, and whatever Company he was in. He hath sometimes owned, that he enjoyed as much of God in his Thoughts, while walking in the Streets, as when he was upon his Knees.

When his Time was out, he chose to carry a whole Year or more with his Master, being afraid lest the World should ingross too much of his Heart and Time; and had almost resolved to retire into the Country, to be out of the Danger of many Temptations, and to have more Opportunities for Meditation and Prayer. But judging truly enough, that that was not the way to be useful in the World, nor could he bring so much Glory to God in a private retired Life, as by settling in a Family and Calling, he accordingly did both. And chose a suitable Companion out of a Religious Family, who desired with him to make

Religion

the Life of Mr. H. Gearing. xxi

Religion her Business; and God was afterwards very kind to him in the like Choice.

It was his Custom every Night to write down in Short-hand some of the most material Things of every Day relating to his Soul, as his Mercies, his Sins, the Frame of his Heart in Duty, gracious Returns of Prayer, special Providences to himself, and others, &c. He desired every Night to lie down in Expectation of Death, and Preparation for it, tho he were in perfect Health: And through the Goodness of God, he enjoyed an extraordinary measure of it for many Years. So that till a little before his Death, I have heard him say, that he had not been above twice kept by Sickness from hearing a Sermon on the Lord's-Day, for the space of Forty Years.

To those Christians who have full leisure for this excellent daily Work of Self-examination, and recording the Result of it, this Course would be of unspeakable Advantage: But I urge it not upon all. It is sufficient to many to renew their Repentance for daily Failings, and record only the extraordinary, and more remarkable Passages of their Lives, not having time to record the ordinary Occurrences of every Day.

But besides what he did every Day, he frequently set apart whole Days with Fasting and Prayer, to examine and try the State of his Soul. Part whereof he transcribed afterwards, tho but a very little part; which is here added, as containing the Character and Trial of a Real Christian; with the reason of his transcribing of it. And I am perswaded he did it with great Sincerity and Humility; the rather, because when about a Month or six Weeks before his Death, he was under some Darknes and Clouds, as to his Evidences for Heaven, and apprehended his Time on Earth would be but short, he desired to discourse with me more than once about the State of his Soul, (which I shall always remember with Thankfulness to God:) in order to my making the better Judgment of his Case, he let me see some of those Papers written many Years before, but sends me a Letter the next Morning to recal them, mentioning his great Trouble after I was gone, lest what he had done savoured of Pride, and ought rather to have been concealed. Such was the Tendernefs of his Conscience in this, and in every thing.

I shall say the less concerning his Examination of himself, because you have here annexed a short Account of the manner of it. The lawfulness of trying our selves by Marks and

and Signs of the Truth of Grace, I hope will not be questioned, when it is but to evidence the Sincerity of our Faith and Repentance, and holy Obedience, while we ascribe unto our Lord Jesus Christ what belongs to him, as our great High-Priest. All that is done by Christ without us, in order to our Salvation, may and ought to be distinguished from what is done by the Spirit of Christ, and his Grace within us; because there is a manifest difference between what causeth our Acceptance with God, and that which is evidential of it, in order to our own Comfort.

His Example in the strict Observation of the Lord's-Day, and conscientious Faithfulness in his Family-Relations, hath been taken notice of to the Edification of many. The Weekly Christian-Sabbath was honourable, and esteemed by him; he made it his Delight. He remembered it before it came, by something preparatory in his Family upon the Saturday Evening. He was early in the Morning on that Day in his Closet, and likewise in Family-Worship, with Prayer and Thanksgiving, and reading the Holy Scriptures, (whereof Children and Servants were to remember somewhat) and so prepared for the Publick Worship. He would not willingly suffer any idle or vain Discourse throughout the

the whole Day; admonishing all about him to take heed of their Thoughts and Words, in a special manner upon the Lord's-Day. He retired as soon as he came home at Noon for a little space, and enquired of Inferiors what they remembred. He exprest his Dislike of those who had been careless herein, by encouraging those that did better.

His Discourse was always serious, savoury, and sutable at his Table; often minding those about him, how many had gone into Eternity the last Week, and of the Bounty and Kindness of Heaven in the Plenty they enjoyed, both for Spirituals and Temporals beyond others. After Dinner a Chapter or two was always read, and some part of a serious practical Book, till it was time to go to the Publick Worship. Therein he was always reverent and serious. After he came home, he retired to his Closet for near an hour, and charged all the rest of the Family to go alone likewise; then he called them together, begun with a short Invocation of God, sung a Psalm, and repeated the Morning-Sermon, and prayed with them before Supper. Many who lived with him can witness, that in Family-Prayer upon the Lord's-Day, he had more than ordinary Affections and Fervency; and it is the Experience of other Christians. O that Heads of Families would but make a Trial!

After

the Life of Mr. H. Gearing. xxv

After Prayer he retired a very little, probably to reflect on his Frame in the last Duty, and then would ask his Children some pertinent Questions concerning the Principles of Religion. After Supper he repeated the Afternoon-Sermon, and enquired what they remembered of it.

He was himself the last in the Family who went to Bed, that he might run over the Heads of what he had heard and repeated. For these he reviewed on Monday Morning, and kept in his Memory all the Week, and every day repeated somewhat thereof to himself, that he might have the Subject of those Sermons continually in his Thoughts, as the Food of his Soul, till another Lord's-Day came. He recommended this Practice unto others, hereby to live the Sermons we hear, and to be under an Awe and Influence by them all the Week after.

On Monday Mornings, ever since the black Bartholomew-Day, when about two thousand Ministers were silenced (for want of such a Liberty and Toleration, as God is now pleased mercifully to allow us) he did from that time until his Death, accustom himself to rise at four a Clock, every
a Monday

Monday Morning, and oftentimes sooner; spending the time in his Closet till six, especially in Prayer for the Nation, and the Church of Christ: I have heard that several others agreed with him in the like Practice.

But in his ordinary course, he was wont to be early every Morning in his Closet, and about seven a Clock would call his Family together, and read a Psalm or two, and pray with them. His great measure of Health was a considerable help to him to do more than others, in this and several Particulars: And accordingly he improved it, without losing any time in unnecessary Recreations; saying, he desired no other Recreation, but to think, and speak of God, and mind his Glory. He often thankfully acknowledged the Divine Goodness, that his Employment was such, that he had more time for serious, solitary Religion than others; and that he had more time for reading in his Shop, and might have it shut sooner in the Evening. And he contracted his Business, or would not chuse to hurry himself by enlarging of it, with that very Design.

The first thing he did there in the Morning, was to read some part of the Holy Scrip-

the Life of Mr. H. Gearing. xxvii

Scripture, with the best Annotations he could procure upon them, and the like in the Evening. And in reading them over again and again, regularly and in course, he found much Advantage; he still perceived such a Majesty, such a Mystery, such a Depth in them, that he was never weary of fathoming, tho he could never reach the bottom: he desired to walk by that Rule, to be guided by that Light, and to derive his Supports, Incouragements, and Hopes from thence.

I hardly ever knew one more careful of his Time, and all that knew him must say the same. He would tarry but a very little while in any Company, where he might not do or receive good. He was so punctual in his time of Retirement for secret Prayer, about six in the Summer, and five in the Winter, (unless he were hearing a Sermon at that hour,) that he would usually make some Excuse or other to break away from Company, tho he returned to them in half an hour. His Communion with God there was discovered by the Frame of his Spirit when he came from thence. It is there we speak our Minds and Hearts more freely to God, and there he communicates of his gracious Influence in a special manner to us. He

xxviii *A Short Account of*

found more Satisfaction and Comfort in one such Hour, by pouring out his Soul to God alone, than in the most witty, chearful Conversation of such, whose Discourse admits no Grace or Profit to the Hearers.

When he hath been desired to go to Bed sooner, or as soon as others, he would often say he would do as others, if he were not certain that he must die: but our sleeping time he said was lost, as to any spiritual Good, any further than it fits us for our Duty, by preserving Health. The last thing he did every Evening, was to go into his Closet, and with Prayer and Self-examination to close the Day.

Once a Week, viz. every Friday Night (as a little before his Death he said,) it had been his constant Custom to review the Mercies of his whole Life, thereby to promote his Humility and Thankfulness, to keep up his Hope in God, and quicken his chearful, diligent Obedience to him.

His Care and Concern for the Souls of those under his Charge, especially his Children, was very extraordinary, and attended with good Success, as several of his Relations (living and dying) have owned. Of his usefulness

in one fulness to one related to him, you have some
to God Account in the Narrative of her Conversion
l Con- to God, which is here annex'd. His Counsels
admi- and Example made those in his Family
to Bed begin to love Religion for his sake, which
d often afterwards they did for its own. God doth
re not often bring us to him, by Instruments of
leeping Nature and Affection, and give the Influ-
Good, ence of his Spirit to carry on those good
Duty, Beginnings.
he did

Closet, He usually ask'd the Assembly's Cate-
ion to chism in his Family twice every Week, and
Night encouraged Inferiors by Rewards to learn it,
it had and to get some select Portions of Scripture
mercies by Heart, and so he brought them to delight
s Hu- in it. With what Solitude, and Care, and
Hope unwearied Pains, with what Compassion, and
lgent of others related to him, from their Declen-
sions in Religion, I and several others can
testify.

His Piety was uniform, equal and harmo-
nious, and all of a piece; and therefore his
ordinary Converse was grave and serious, edi-
fying and useful: his Discourse becoming a
Christian, that was under the Eye and Awe of
God, and in the Fear of the Lord all the day
long.

long. He was always ready to begin or promote such Discourse, and greatly lamented that when good People meet together, they have so little talk of Spiritual and Religious Matters. I wish, for my own sake, I had spent more time with him upon this Account, for he desired it not on any other. He valued not Visits of Ceremony and Complement, no not of Ministers, or any others, that would not help him as a Christian. I trust his Memory will be a living Sermon to me, and to many others that knew him.

In his Trade he had many and great Disappointments and Losses, and yet bore them with admirable Patience. He thanked God that he was carried through them, with so much Calmness and Satisfaction, that he could always speak good of God; tho hardly any, that did not trade for more, have been known to have lost so much.

He would not buy or sell without lifting up his Heart to God for Direction. And as an Argument of his tender Conscience, I have been informed by one (who must needs know the truth of it) that he would not let his Silk lie on the damper side of the Warehouse; lest it should thereby increase in Weight, and so wrong the Buyer.

He

the Life of Mr. H. Gearing. xxxi

He walked with God in his Calling so regularly, as a Christian, that I am perswaded he enjoyed more of God in his Shop and Warehouse, in his Trade and Business, than many of us do in our Retirements for Prayer and Devotion. For let him come when he would from his Secular Affairs, his Mind was more Spiritual and Heavenly, than most ordinary Christians are, when they come from the solemn Exercises of Religion. In short, his Principles, his Thoughts, his Inclinations, his Affections and Actions, his Carriage and Converse in the whole of them, was such as might be truly called a walking with God.

He was ready to do good to all his Acquaintance, by Counsel and Reproof, by seasonable Instruction and Admonition; whereof divers now living must needs be sensible; and some of them, I hope, do thank God for his Freedom in that kind.

His Charity to the Poor was answerable to the rest, according to his Ability. Many a poor Family of Country Ministers, and Ministers Widows in City and Country, will feel that he is dead: For what he could not do of himself, he would endeavour to procure of others, for the Relief of such whose Necessities he knew.

He

He never neglected a Monthly Opportunity of coming to the Lord's-Table, tho he hath often complained to me, that he had not ordinarily any sensible ravishing Joy; however Careful and Strict he was in his Preparations before, as well as Devout and Reverent when he came. But he durst not stay away: He came humbly to pay Homage to a Crucified Saviour, and to avow to all the World, that he gloried only in the Cross of Christ; and was resolved to be found in the way of his Duty.

Now it would be expected, that One so Exemplary, so Circumspect, so much above this World, One so useful upon Earth, and so ripe for Heaven, should have lived in the most raised Consolations, and the most joyful Transports, as if he had been already almost in Heaven, or just come from thence. Surely, will some say, such an one as He must have the Earnest, the Seal, the Fore-tastes of Glory, beyond his Brethren; he must needs walk on the Top of Pisgah, in the Light of God's Countenance, in the sight of the Heavenly Canaan, and be past the Fears, and Doubts, and Complaints of other Trembling Christians. But God did not think this fit for him, in the latter part of his Life. Nevertheless he had that which was equivalent, or better than the highest Flights of Assurance can be. For
under

the Life of Mr. H. Gearing. xxxiii

*under his Complaints of Doubts, and Dead-
ness, and want of sensible Communion with
God, he had a most steady Trust in God through
Jesus Christ, and an uniform Obedience : And,
as he has been often told, his Doubts seemed
to proceed from the height of his Grace,
rather than the weakness of it. For such
was his extraordinary Love to God, that he
never thought he could have Evidence enough
of the Divine Presence and Favour : tho that
was mixed with some Error of Judgment, as
expecting more than God hath promised in that
kind ; and as arguing from such Arbitrary
Dispensations of God, unto such Conclusions,
as cannot justly be drawn from the Enjoy-
ment, or the Want of these things. For
certainly his Judicious Love to God, his in-
ward Esteem of Holiness and Heaven, his
fixed Hatred and Abhorrence of Sin, and
his habitual Self-denial and Devotedness to
God, with constant Watchfulness and Care
to please him, and keep a Conscience void
of Offence towards God and Man, is a better
Evidence of one beloved of God, than the
highest Transports can amount to : Especially
in his Case, who under some Darkeness and
Fears, was able yet to hold on his Way, and
his Work, and to persevere with unshaken
Stedfastness to the very last.*

Tho

xxxiv *A Short Account of*

Tho something also of his Natural Temper, and Bodily Constitution ought to be considered, to abate his Suspicion of himself, upon the account of his not having such raised, sensible Consolations, and Joys as some others. Besides that, his Humility in judging of himself, and his earnest Desire of farther Communion with God, made him overlook what he did enjoy, even in this kind. For often when he joined with others, or when he prayed alone, his Affections were more lively, after having been forty Years in Christ, than most young Converts are the first Year.

However, in this God was very gracious to him, that tho he feared the Devil might assault him at last, he did not permit it. But with a calm Submission, and regular, steady Trust, and hope in the Divine Mercy, with Eyes, and Hands, and Heart lift up to Heaven, he quietly departed this Life, and is at Rest in the Bosom of Christ.

If I would pronounce a Blessing on his Family, and surviving Relations, upon his Wife, and Children, his Friends and Acquaintance, that love and honour his Memory; I know not how to do it by a more profitable Prayer, than to beg of God that they

the Life of Mr. H. Gearing. xxxv

they may tread in his Steps, and walk as he walked; that his God may be their God; that they may follow him as he was a Follower of Christ; and so at last be more than Conquerors over the World, and Sin, and Death, and him that hath the Power of it, the Devil. Thanks be to God who hath given him, and assured us of the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ: To him be Glory throughout all the Churches for ever. Amen.

Advertise-

Advertisement of the Bookseller.

IN a short time will be published two Discourses more of the same Author, viz. *Of tempting Christ*, from 1 Cor. 10. 9. to silence the Cavils of some, and prevent the Sin of others. The other of *Family Religion*, in three Letters to a Friend. Printed for John Lawrence.

T H E

THE
Character and Trial
OF
A REAL CHRISTIAN.

Now follows, out of his own Papers, the manner of his examining his Heart and Life, State and Frame, and the Result thereof recorded, and written for his Support in after-Difficulties. Some may be excited by it to an Imitation, and others find Encouragement by what reliev'd him against his Doubts and Fears, and enabled him to persevere even without full Assurance.

HENRY GEARING.

THO I have been under much *Hardness and Deadness* for many Years, yet I thought good for my Encouragement, here to record God's Goodness to me sometimes. By looking over

B

my

my Books, in which I have wrote down in Short-hand every Night, how it was with me in the Day; I find that I have sometimes been quickned and affected in Prayer; often in Family-Prayer at Night on the Lord's-day. Tho I began very much indisposed, yet it pleased God to draw out my Heart in Earnest Desires, and I have had some Meltings more than usual. At other times in Family-Prayer at Night, I have been more than ordinarily affected. And sometimes under the Word preach'd: Once at the *Morning Lecture* when I heard a Sermon of *buying the Pearl of Price*. At other times I find I was affected greatly in Family-Prayer, so as scarce to be able to speak for weeping. At another time I have recorded how I was quickened by hearing a Sermon of Mr. *Swinnock* on that Text, *He will not break the bruised Reed*. At several other times have had lively Affections in secret Prayer.

Often in my walk to *Clapham*, I have had my Heart drawn out in earnest, fervent Desires after God. Once repeating on a Lord's-day Evening a Sermon on that Text, *Behold I stand at the Door and knock, and whosoever opens to me, I will come in and sup with him*. I was so affected I could not go on for Tears, but was fain to

to lay down my Book. At another time the like in repeating a Sermon of *the Redemption of Time*. At other times, I find recorded, that on the Lord's-day I went to Family-Prayer very sad, but God did great greatly assist me, and my Soul was melted, so that I could not proceed or speak for Tears. At other times in *Prayer*, and sometimes in *singing of Psalms*. But for the most part I have been a great Stranger to Joy and Comfort ever since the days of my Youth. These things I wrote *March 18, 1689*. being Remarks in general of near twenty Years past.

As to what I have written in this little Book, it was first in Short-hand, and never intended to be transcribed. But afterwards I considered that many things in it might be of use to me by another's reading of it, if it should please God to lay his Hand upon me, that I could not myself read my Short-hand: And I know not but something in it may be useful to others.

I hope and pray it may be so unto many. May the like serious Spirit accompany every Reader in the perusal of the following Papers, as he had in writing them: Beg it of God, and then begin to read.

Anno 1676, March 28.

HAVING had in my Thoughts sometimes to keep a secret Fast in my Closet, chiefly to search and try the State of my Soul, this Day I did it, and hope I did set about it in the Integrity of my Heart: my chief Design was to examine how the Case stood between God and my Soul, whether I had indeed a Work of saving Grace wrought in me. And that I might get Corruption that is strong more mortified, especially the Sin I am most inclined unto; and that I might be enabled from God to carry it better in my Christian Course, both in my Family and in secret Retirements, to the Glory of God:

After Prayer that God would help me to try my self, I went to the work of *Self-Examination* by the Characters that Mr. *Ambrose* hath given, and by some Characters my Cousin *Calamy* laid down, and others of Mr. *Allen*, Mr. *Nalton* and Mr. *Swinnock*. I spent a good deal of time herein, and hope I desired to deal impartially with my self; and did beg of God heartily, that I might make a right Judgment of my self: I endeavoured to keep my Heart close to the Work; and
tho

tho I could not meet with great Comfort, yet upon serious search I cannot find but that God hath wrought *true Grace* in me, blessed be his Name; I hope I may have recourse to this Day while I live, for Support in any case.

I did also read over the *Covenant* I entered into with the Lord about nine Years since, and renewed my Covenant, and gave up my self afresh to the Lord, and took him for my God and Portion. I hope in the Lord that I was sincere and upright. I found some Ease and Quiet in my Mind afterwards. O that I may not now grow careless, but live answerably, and remember I have renewed my Covenant with the Lord! and if he hath in any wise spoke Peace to my Soul, let me not again return to Folly, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

An. 1676. July 27. Looking over my Book where I enter at Night how it is with me every Day, I find I have been out of order many times in Duty, since the Trial of my self mentioned here, but hope I did desire to have my Heart with God. And the Lord was pleased sometimes in Duty to draw out my Soul in earnest and hearty Desires after him: my Heart through Mercy hath been sometimes (tho too seldom) in a good Frame; the Lord

have Mercy on me, and grant I may be sincere and upright with him. He is pleased still (as for many Years past) to withdraw from me, and I do not meet with much Comfort in his Ordinances. But I remember what Mr. N. use to say, that *Grace is better than Comfort*. God grant that I may make sure of *Grace*, and act and exercise *Grace*, and wait upon him for *Comfort*. It is worth waiting for all the days of my Life: The Lord help me, tho I sit in Darknes and see no Light, to trust in the Lord, and stay my self on my God. The Lord help me to keep up Faith and Hope in him through Christ, to wait and trust, and hope, and believe still; against hope of Sense, to believe in hope of a Promise. The Lord make me careful to mind his Glory, and doing my Duty in the Place in which he hath set me: for I am apt to be troubled, lest I should fail of my Duty towards those committed to my Charge. The Lord in Mercy grant I may set to his Work with all my Might, and get my Work done before my Day of Life be ended; and that my Heart may be thoroughly taken off from this World, and I may prepare for publick Calamities, which are much feared, by reason of the abounding of all Sin and Wickedness more and more. The Lord enable me to do
and

and suffer his Will, and let me have his Presence, and his Promise made good, not to suffer me to be tempted above what he will enable me to bear, 1 Cor. 10. 13. and that I may readily let all go for Christ, if I am called to it. The Lord grant I may be made meet to be Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, and get my Evidences for Heaven ready, which through the assistance and help of God I desire to go about. The Lord grant I may not be deceived, but may gather *such Evidences*, as will hold out, and bear me up in the midst of Troubles and Trials, yea in the Hour of Death, and the Day of Judgment. The Lord in infinite Mercy sanctify to me the Death of others: God hath of late taken away many of my Neighbours, Acquaintance, Friends and Relations, Ministers as well as others (a little while since Mr. *Pledger* and Mr. *Wells* in one day.) O that all may be sanctified, and especially the Death of my *Wife*, that I may yet make such use of that Providence as the Lord would expect; and be ready and prepared for my own Departure hence, whensoever it shall please my dear God and Father to call me home.

Being now about to enter here, what I have to shew for a Work of Grace in my Heart, and a Right and Title to Heaven,

I desire of the Lord to help me in this great Affair, that I may not be deceived; but that what I here enter may be the true State of my Soul, and that which will hold out, and yield me Comfort in an Hour of Distress.

It hath been in my Thoughts several times to enquire what I had to shew for my hope of Heaven: that which ran most in my Mind was *Faith* and *Repentance*, which upon diligent search of my Heart, I hope I have.

First for Faith: If I have true Faith, I shall certainly be saved, so saith the holy Scriptures, *He that believes shall be saved.* Joh 3. 16. *For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life.* Now Faith in Christ is described in the Assemblies Catechism to be a *saving Grace*, whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for Salvation, as he is offered to us in the Gospel, which I hope I desire to do: I hope I do most heartily desire to take Christ on his own Terms, as *King, Priest and Prophet*, in all his Offices, and am willing to be ruled by him as well as saved by him: I hope I desire to rest upon Jesus Christ alone for Salvation, and own no other Saviour but him. I hope I have the Faith of Reliance, to rest and center in Christ. I hope I can with

all my Soul throw my self upon the Mercy of God in Christ; and if I perish, to perish there, trusting in him that I shall not perish. Blessed be God I am often lifting up my Heart to Christ: *O my dear Jesus! Blessed Jesus!* on thee, on thee alone I rest, when I am in Fears, and Doubts, and Troubles. I hope I desire to say with the Church, *In the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength*: Righteousness for Justification, and Strength for Sanctification, and the subduing of Sin. I hope I desire to renounce any Trust in my own Righteousness and Duties, and wholly to rely and rest upon Jesus Christ. When I have performed any Duty, I desire to own that I deserve Hell for the sinful Imperfections of it; yea, for the best Duty I can perform: And to have my Trust only in the Death and Merits, Satisfaction and Intercession of Christ. Tho Spiritual Pride is very apt to rise in me, yet I hope I do not allow it, the Lord set my Heart more against it. I hope I desire with the Apostle, *Phil. 3. 9. to be found in him, not having my own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith.*

I hope Christ is precious to me, now that isian Evidence of Faith: 1 Pet. 2. 7. *To you*

10 *The Character and Trial*

that believe he is precious. I hope I desire to prize Christ above all the World; and if I know my Heart, I would not part with the Hopes I have by Christ of Heaven for ten thousand Worlds. I hope I desire to prize Jesus Christ, as the Chiefest of ten thousand, altogether lovely. The Lord make me upright in this matter, that I may see the Worth and Excellency that is in him, so as to be in love with him.

Secondly for Repentance; If I have that Grace, I am sure to be saved; *Acts 3. 19.* Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord. *Luke 13. 3.* Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish; therefore if we do repent, we shall not perish. Now Repentance is described to be a saving Grace, whereby a Sinner out of the true sense of his Sin, and apprehension of the Mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his Sin turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavours after new Obedience. I hope the Lord hath wrought this Repentance in me: I hope he hath given me a true sight and sense of Sin, and that I am convinced of the Evil and Danger of it. I hope I have an apprehension also of the Mercy of God in Christ: I do not at all doubt, but there is Mercy enough in God

God through Christ to forgive and pardon the greatest Sins, if they are repented of. The Lord hath declared himself to be the *Lord God gracious and merciful, pardoning Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*, Exod. 34. 6. I hope I desire to be truly sorry for all my Sins, to grieve and mourn for them; tho my Heart be hard, yet I hope I could be glad if it were broken, that I could mourn more for my Sins. Surely it hath been a trouble to me many times in Confession of Sin, that I could not mourn and weep, and was not affected as I desired. I hope I desire to *hate Sin* also, the Lord work a true Hatred of all Sin more and more in me: I hope I desire to turn from all Sin unto God, with full purpose of Heart to cleave to him: I hope the bent of my Soul is right for God; tho I have many Failings and Miscarriages, I hope the full Purpose and Resolution of my Heart is for God and his Ways.

It being upon my Mind what I had further to note that might be an Evidence of Grace, I hope these things following, which it pleased God to bring to my Thoughts, may be some ground to believe God hath wrought savingly upon me.

Surely I do *confess* my Sins often to the Lord in secret, and desire to have my Heart

Heart penitently affected with them, and hope I desire to *forsake* all my Sins; now the Scripture saith, 1 *Job.* 1. 9. *If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.* And *Prov.* 28. 13. *Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his Sins shall have Mercy.* I hope I do not allow my self in any Sin, but desire Power against it, as well as Pardon of it; yea the Sin I am most inclined to, tho my Heart is often apt to go out after it, the Lord forgive it: Yet I hope it is my earnest Desire that I may have Strength against it; the Lord help me to say with *David*, *Psal.* 18. 23. *I was upright before him, and kept my self from mine Iniquity.* I hope I desire from my Soul to mourn for Heart-Sins, as Hardness and Deadness, and Wandrings and Distractions in Duty, &c. I hope this is a good sign that I am (if my Heart deceives me not) really troubled for secret Sins, which the World knows nothing of; and that I do not allow sinful Thoughts. I hope I desire to mourn for the Sins of the Land, and to lay to Heart the great Dishonours done to God by others.

I hope there is a Change wrought in me, and that I am a new Creature, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *If I am a new Creature, then I am*

in Christ: I hope so, because there are such strivings and fightings in me against Sin, such strugglings between the Flesh and the Spirit. There is certainly a resisting of Sin, if my Heart do not wonderfully deceive me. Now Mr. N. used to say, *It is true Grace to resist Sin, it is strong Grace to conquer Sin.* I consider how it was with Paul, *Rom. 7.* he saith there was a Law in his Members warring against the Law of his Mind; and the Evil he would not do, that he did: Methinks it is so with me sometimes, I hope this striving and struggling is a sign I am not dead in Sins and Trespases; for a dead Man strives not, moves not. I beg of God often and heartily, that I may be sincere and upright, and hope I have from my Heart many times pray'd with David, that God would search me and try me in Mercy, and find out if there be any way of Wickedness in me, if there be any Sin that lies hid in my Soul. And have been glad when Ministers have come to *Examination*, that so I might try my self, especially in my younger Years, when I heard Mr. N. and used to try my self by Characters, that he laid down; and have then found Comfort and great hopes of a Work of Grace wrought in me: and wondered how those that heard that Soul-awakening Minister could bear it, if they did

14: *The Character and Trial*

did not find God had been at work in their Souls. I do remember when I was young, what delight I took in hearing that good Man, and have been as it were in a Corner of Heaven; I have often had my Heart quickned, warmed, and much drawn out to God. Now, tho to my shame I may write it, I have abated much in my Zeal, and Love to God and his Ways, since I have had more to do with the World, and a Family to provide for; yet I desire to remember the days of old, the Years of the Right-hand of the most High, and hope I may take Comfort from the Experience I have had formerly: remembring where Grace is once wrought, it shall never be extinguished; whom Christ loves once, he loves to the end; and that God never repents that he gives Grace to any.

I hope, tho by my Sins I have caused the Lord much to depart from me for many Years, that I do not meet with such Quickning and Comfort in Duties as formerly, yet that I do not content my self in this Condition, but desire to have my Soul follow hard after God, to lament after him; and do I hope prize a Smile from him, and the Light of his Countenance above the whole World: and do often pray with *David*, *Psal. 4. When others say, who will shew us any good? that*
God

God would lift up the Light of his Countenance upon me. And I desire with the Spouse, to seek him, whom (I hope I may say at least) my Soul desires to love. I hope it is a good sign that I have frequent Thoughts of God, and do often lift up my Heart to him; as when I lie down at Night, and awake in the Morning, I desire my first and last Thoughts may be with God; I hope I may say with *David*, *I desire to set the Lord always before me*; Psal. 16.8.

I hope I am desirous and willing to yield Obedience to all the Commandments of God, and not to pick and chuse: I hope I would not allow my self in the Omission of any Duty. Now Christ saith, *Ye are my Disciples if ye do whatsoever I command you*, Joh. 15.14. I hope I have from my Heart prayed many times that God would make known to me, how I should walk to please him. I hope I desire patiently to continue in well-doing, and to wait upon God, tho I do not meet with him. Now there is a Promise of Blessedness to them that wait for him, *Isa. 30. 18.* and the Promise is, *Rom. 2. 7.* *To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, and Honour and Immortality, that God would give Eternal Life.* I hope I desire my Will may be according to God's Will, and would do better than I do. Now if

16 *The Character and Trial*

I am but really willing, tho I have many Failings, and fall infinitely short, yet it is said, 2 Cor. 8. 12. *Where there is a willing Mind, it is accepted according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* And our Saviour speaks graciously to his Disciples when he found them asleep, Mat. 26. 41. *The Spirit truly is willing, but the Flesh is weak.*

I hope I desire to be merciful to them who are in Misery, and have sometimes been glad of an opportunity (tho, the Lord forgive, too backward at other times). Now our Lord saith, *Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy;* Mat. 5. 7. I hope I desire to cleanse myself from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, to have my Heart purified. Now it is said, *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God,* Mat. 5. 8. I hope I have counted the Cost, what it may cost me to be a Christian indeed, and am fully resolved in the Strength of Christ to let all go for him. It is my Desire and earnest Prayer (I hope from my very Heart) that if God call me to it, I may be enabled to lay down my Life for his sake. Now Christ saith, *He that forsakes Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for his Name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and in-*
herit :

berit Everlasting Life, Mat. 19. 29. and he that loseth his Life shall find it. I hope I desire, if I am called to it, to bear the Cross as well as receive the Crown. Now it is said, *If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him*, 2 Tim. 2. 12. These things it pleased God to bring to my Mind as some ground of hope that my State is good. I enter'd these things here Aug. 11. 1676.

Now my Intention is, if it please God, to make use of other Helps, and search my Heart by them, and enter them down here, that I may have resort to them in a time of need; and the Lord help me further in this great Work of *Self-Examination*, that I may not be deceived for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

Having endeavoured to search my Heart thoroughly, after earnest Prayer to God, I hope I find the Evidences of Grace in me that Mr. *Allen* hath laid down, which are these.

1. Where there is true Grace, there is a hearty Willingness to part with every Sin. Where ever there is this Breach made between Sin and the Soul, it is Grace that hath made it. When Sin hath lost the Will, it hath lost the Man; when Christ hath gained the Will, he hath gained the Man. *Give me thy Heart*, is the same as,
Be

Be willing to be mine. Reason saith, I ought to turn; Conscience saith, I must turn, and yet nothing may follow: but when the Heart saith, *I will turn to God*, then the Work is done. Reason saith, these Idols ought not to stand; Conscience saith, these Lusts must be subdued: but when the *Will* saith to them, Get you hence, there is a Work of Grace begun. This Willingness discovers it self to be *prevailing*.—First, When a Man is truly willing to part with Sin, there will be *Resolutions* against it; he takes part with God against Sin, and usues all means for the conquering of it.—Secondly, This Resolution will bring forth *Resistance*. An Heart weary of Sin will fall to striving against Sin; *Gal. 5. 17. The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh; these two are contrary one to the other.*

2. Where ever there is true Grace, there is a preferring in the Esteem and Choice of a strict and sincere Godly Life, above any other Life in the World. Tho the foolish World runs a madding after Money and Pleasure, spend their Days, waste their Lives, prostitute their Consciences, throw away their Souls upon these things; yet one Dracm of Godliness, one Day spent in the Fear of the Lord, is better than all this; *Psal. 4. 6.*

There

There be many that say, *Who will shew us any good ? but Lord, lift up thou the Light of thy Countenance on me, saith a gracious Soul ; Thou hast put Gladness in my Heart, more than in the time when their Corn and Wine increased.* Psal. 17. 14, 15. *The Men of the World have their Portion in this Life, their Bellies thou fillest with thy hid Treasure ; they are full of Children, and leave the rest of their Substance to their Babes : But as for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy Likeness.* The Men of this World as they seek, so they have their Portion in this Life. They have a gallant time of it here, great Portions, great Prosperity, enough to spend on themselves, and leave to their Children after them ; this they have, and much good may it do them : let me but behold the Face of God in Righteousness, walk before the Lord in my Integrity, keep a good Conscience, live in the Obedience of his Will, and in the Light of his Countenance ; and then let them take the Corn and Wine, and what else they can get. *Let the Lord be mine, and I shall never envy them their Portion : Psal. 119. 30. I have chosen the way of Truth : V. 111. Thy Testimonies have I taken as my Heritage for ever.* Observe, 1. That a Godly Man's settled Judgment is, That a Godly Life

Life is the best and happiest Life: 2. That a Godly Man's Choice is according to his Judgment: He esteems the Fear of the Lord above Gold, and he chooseth it before Gold: He is better pleased and doth rather take up with the meanest and most afflicted Condition in a way of Holiness, than with the most plentiful and prosperous Estate in a way of Sin: He prefers the Poverty of Christ before the Riches of the World. 3. Godly Men and Worldly Men may be known one from the other by the *Choice* they make for themselves; he that makes a Worldly Choice is a Worldly Man, and he that makes a Godly Choice is a Godly Man.

3. Whosoever hath true Grace, doth actually live a Godly Life: The Tree is best known by its Fruit; the Sincerity of our Purposes by our Performances. *He that doth Righteousness is righteous*, 1 Joh. 3. 7. A Godly Man makes Godliness the business of his Life: Religion is a Christian's Trade: A Man's Trade is his constant Work, and not the Exercise of now and then a day or two: Godliness is a Christian's daily Walk: Do not inquire only about your Affections, what your Desires are, or what your Joys are, what your Comforts are, or what your Peace is, but what your *Paths* are.

When

When all comes to all, this is the surest Mark, *He that doth Righteousness is righteous, he that doth not Righteousness is not of God.*

Mr. Sheppard, in his sincere Convert, lays down three Marks, wherein a Child of God goes beyond a Hypocrite; and I having examined my Heart, hope I find them in me.

1. No Hypocrite, or Unregenerate Man, tho he goes never so far, let him do never so much, but *he lives in one Sin or other*, secret or open, little or great: Now I hope in the Lord, I do not live in any Sin.

2. No Hypocrite, no Unregenerate Man ever came to be *poor in Spirit*, and to be carried off from all Duties unto Christ, in regard of Dependance and Trust. If it were possible for them to forsake and break loose for ever from all Sin, yet here they stick. They seek to save themselves by their Duties without Christ. Now if my Heart doth not very much deceive me, I desire to renounce all Things, and rest only on Christ.

3. If any Unregenerate Man come unto Christ, he never takes up his Rest in Christ *only*; but he would have Christ and the World too, is not content with Christ alone. But I hope I desire to be

content

22 *The Character and Trial*

content with Christ alone ; and to say as the Martyr, None but Christ, None but Christ.

Mr. D. in his Book of the *Lord's-Supper*, to prove that one hath a Principle of Spiritual Life, and is not dead in Trespasses and Sins, writes thus. Canst thou groan and cry to the Lord for an Interest in Christ, and will nothing quiet and still thee but Jesus Christ? then surely thou dost *live*; all the Creatures cannot quiet thee, till thou hast hopes that Christ is formed in thee. Surely I find this sign of Spiritual Life in me. *Again*, Dost thou *grow*? it may be thou canst not say thou hast more Grace; but this thou findest, thou hast more Desires after Grace; that is, more Grace. Art thou not only thankful for a little Grace, but art reaching after more? Dost thou grow more weary of thy Sin, and more earnest after Christ? I hope in the Lord it is thus with me, that I am more weary of Sin, and desire more Grace: Now Growth is a sign of Life. *Again*, put this Question to thy self, Do I hunger and thirst after Christ? this is an Evidence of Spiritual Life: Dead Men do not hunger and thirst after Christ. Now I hope in the Lord I do hunger and thirst after Christ, and nothing but himself will content me.

Again,

Again, Ask thy Soul, Do I love God and Christ, or do I not? These Marks he gives of Love to Christ. *Lord! I love thee*; for I am grieved at thy Absence, and am rejoiced at thy Presence. *Lord! I love thee*, for I love those that are like Thee. *O my Lord, I love thee*; for I love the Place and Duties where thou art wont to meet thy People, and warm their Hearts; but if thou art not there, I cannot take up contentedly with them. *Lord! I humbly say, I love thee*; for I dare not deny but I am grieved when thou art dishonoured by my self or others; tho I grieve for this less than I should, because I love thee less than I ought. *Lord! I love thee*; for I desire to have an Heart that should be willing to part with all for Thee; things sinful in themselves at all times, and things lawful when thou callest me to it. Once more I humbly say, *I love thee*; for I would have an Heart to love, and long, and look for thy Coming and Appearance in Glory.

Mr. *Ambrose*, directing to try our Title to Heaven, adviseth, *First* to write down the Scripture-Marks of Grace or Glory, and mentions these several Scriptures following. 1 Joh. 2. 3. *Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.* 2 Cor. 1. 12. *For our rejoicing is this,*

24 *The Character and Trial*

this, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Godly Simplicity and Sincerity, we have had our Conversation in the World. 1 Joh. 3. 9, 10. Whosoever is born of God sinneth not, because his Seed abideth in him; neither can he sin, because he is born of God. In this the Children of God are manifest, &c. 1 Joh. 4. 13. Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 1 Joh. 3. 14. We know that we have passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren. James 1. 12. There is a Crown of Life the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

But above all, observe these Texts following, as containing the special Gospel-Conditions, to which we find so often annexed the Promise of Justification and Glorification. Joh. 3. 16. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have Everlasting Life. Joh. 5. 24. He that believeth hath Everlasting Life, and shall not come into Condemnation; but is passed from Death unto Life. Joh. 6. 40. And this is the Will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth in him may have Everlasting Life. Joh. 20. 31. These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his*

his Name. Acts 16. 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Rom. 10. 9, 10. If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy Heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Heb. 10. 39. We are not of them who draw back unto Perdition; but of them that believe, to the saving of the Soul. 1 Joh. 5. 13. These things have I written unto you, that believe in the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have Eternal Life. From the first Text we gather the Scripture-mark of universal Obedience; from the second Sincerity; from the third, Opposition against, and Abstinence from Sin; from the fourth, Spiritual Performance of holy Duties; from the fifth, a Love of the Brethren; from the sixth, a Love of Christ; from all the rest Faith in Christ, the Root and Spring of all other Graces, and necessary Conditions of Pardon and Eternal Life.

Proceed we now to put the Question to our selves, but be sure to state it aright: Let it not be, Whether there be any Good in us at all? for so we shall err on the one hand; nor yet, Whether we have such and such a degree and measure of Grace? for so we shall err on the other hand: But, Whether, according to the fore-mentioned Scriptures, such and such

26 *The Character and Trial*

a saving Grace be in us or not? Now I having begged of God his Help to try the State of Soul by what follows; this 17th of August, 1676. and do hope I find the true Marks of saving Grace in my Soul, and desire here to enter them down, that I may have recourse to it in time of need, and the Lord grant I be sincere.

1. *O my Soul!* hast thou respect to, and dost observe all God's Commandments? Dost thou keep the Law in Truth and Sincerity, tho not in gradual Perfection? Dost thou know God in part, and love God truly by a sincere Obedience? Dost thou keep the Commandments in an Evangelical Sense? and wherein thou failest, dost thou acknowledg thy Failings, and rely upon Christ for Pardon? Is thy universal Obedience internal and spiritual, as well as external? Is thy Delight in the Law of God after the Inward Man? Is thy Obedience to the Duties of both Tables? Dost thou make Conscience of particular Duties in every Relation?

2. *O my Soul!* hast thou Sincerity and Uprightness of Heart? Is there a powerful Change of the whole Man by the Grace of God? Dost thou do what is good upon this account, because God commands it? not because it will agree with thy Ends and Advantage, but because God hath required

required it? Art thou diligent and conscientious in secret Duties to perform them? and in Spiritual or Heart-Sins, and secret Lusts, to avoid them? Dost thou serve God in Spirit? Dost thou eye God, whether in private or publick? Dost thou set thy self zealously against those Sins thou art most inclined unto? Dost thou hate Sin most in thy self, and in those that are nearest unto thee? Hast thou respect to all God's Commandments? but yet to the Duties of the first Table before the second, to the Commands of greater Duties before those of lesser Duties? or if in all these Particulars thou findest not such an Uprightness as hath no Deceit or Falshood, or carnal Respects, at all joined with it, (for as all other Graces are but in part, so are we *sincere* and *upright* but *in part*) art thou humbled under thy Hypocrisy and spiritual Guile? And dost thou trust only to Christ? and dost thou cry as *David* did, for *Truth in the inward parts*? Dost thou observe the Frame of thy Heart in those things, which none but God knows?

3. *O my Soul!* Dost thou oppose against, and abstain from Sin? And is this Opposition and Abstinence settled and fixed in thy Heart, not only for some fits and seasons, but is it the habitual Inclination

28 *The Character and Trial*

nation of thy Soul? Is there in thee a Difficulty, yea a kind of Impossibility to sin with *Wilfulness* and *purposed Continuance*, or with such an universal Consent of Soul as wicked Men do? And doth this Impossibility to sin arise from a kindly Work of Grace within, and not from any terrible Restraint upon thy Conscience without? Dost thou in good measure and by degrees not only leave outward gross Sins, but even conquer and crucify the inward Body of Sin? Dost thou oppose and leave Sin because of the evil Nature of Sin, because it is contrary to God? Is the bent and inclination of thy Heart against Sin universally? Dost thou with *Paul*, bewail the evil Motions of thy Heart? Dost thou with *Hezekiah*, humble thy self for the Pride of thy Heart? Is *Pride*, Unbelief, Earthliness, and the several Lusts of thy Soul discovered and crucified? Dost thou abhor secret Sins as well as publick? and fear God's knowledge of thy Sins more than all the World's? Dost thou abhor and lament Defects in holy Ordinances, as well as gross Sins, Neglects of holy Duties, Lukewarmness and Distractions therein? Dost thou not only oppose Sin in thy self, but set against it in others? Dost thou choose rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God,

than

than to sin against God? Art thou such an one, that thou canst not sin as others, thou darest not sin, thou hast an habitual Averseness to Sin? Dost thou not live in a course of known Sins, thou sinnest not out of Malice, nor makest a Trade of Sin?

4. *O my Soul!* Dost thou perform Duties spiritually? Are thy Motives and Ends spiritual in thy spiritual Actions? such as the Command of God, injoying of Communion with God, the Light of his Countenance, Increase of Grace, &c. Is there Zeal, Fervency, Activity in thy Performance of Duties? Is there in thee a free Inclination to the Duties that God requireth? Are there in thee strong Oppositions and Combats against the Flesh, and unregenerate part?

5. *O my Soul!* Dost thou love the Brethren? Dost thou love them because of the Image of God in them? Dost thou love them because they are godly? Dost thou love all the Godly, Rich and Poor, High and Low, but them most of all that excel most in Purity and Godliness? Art thou ready and willing to own them as Brethren, and to join with them in time of Persecution? Hast thou an holy Zeal against Sinners? an Impatiency and holy Grief at the Wickedness of others? Dost thou

procure all spiritual Good to the Brethren as thou art able? Dost thou pray for them, exhort them, provoke them to Good? Dost thou bear their Burdens, and forbear their Infirmities? And if sometimes thou findest some Envyings, some Impatiencies towards some of the Brethren, (for in the best is Imperfection of Grace) yet is thy Soul troubled at this? Dost thou pray down these Sins in thy Heart? and art thou at no rest till it be otherwise with thee? Art thou not asham'd to be call'd one of the Believers, one of the holy Brethren in time of Persecution?

6. *O my Soul!* Dost thou love Christ? Dost thou evidence this Love by keeping his Commandments, and by accepting of his Rebukes? Is thy Love to Christ a long and lasting, ever-living and continuing Love? Dost thou love him in Sincerity? Cannot many Waters of Affliction quench this thy Love, nor the Floods of Persecution drown it? Is thy Love a transcendent Love, surpassing all other Love? Doth the Love of Father, Mother, Wife, Son, Daughter, Brother, Sister, yea and of thy own Life also, give place to this Love? Doth Christ sit in the Throne of thy Heart, and do all these sit below at thy Foot-stool? Dost thou bear such fervent warm Affections to Christ, that thou wouldst

wouldst be content to part with all, rather than part with him? Canst thou say with *David*, *The Lord is my Portion, and whom have I in Heaven but thee, and whom on Earth that I desire in comparison of thee?* The World, it may be, will be sometimes creeping into thy Affections, thou canst not be quite free from the Love of the World; yet dost thou in thy ordinary, settled, prevailing Judgment, and Affections, prefer Christ before all things in the World? Dost thou make Christ the End of thy Desires, the very Reason why thou hearest and prayest? Dost thou first seek the Kingdom of Christ and his Righteousness? If thou dost not seek it so zealously as thou shouldst, yet hath it the chief of thy Desires and Endeavours? and is nothing else desired and preferred before it? Is thy Valuation of it so high, that thou wouldst not exchange thy Title to it, and hopes of God's Acceptance for any Worldly Good whatsoever? Nay, art thou willing to labour and suffer for it; and tho the Flesh may sometimes shrink or draw back, yet art thou resolved and content to go through all?

7. *O my Soul!* Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Dost thou find that thou art naturally a lost condemned Creature; and dost thou believe that Jesus

Christ is the Mediator, who hath made a sufficient Satisfaction to the Law ; and considering that in the Gospel he is offered without exception to All, dost thou heartily consent that he, and he alone shall be thy Saviour ? Art thou content to take him for thy King, to govern and guide thee by his Laws and Spirit ? Art thou willing to obey him, even when he commands the hardest Duties, and those which most cross the Desires of the Flesh ? Is it thy sorrow when thou breakest thy Resolution herein, and thy Joy when thou keepest close in Obedience to him ? And tho the World and Flesh do sometimes intice and over-reach thee, yet is it thy ordinary Desire and Resolution to obey ? so that thou wouldst not change thy Lord and Master for all the World.

By these things he adviseth to try, and bring our Hearts to answer ; suffer them not to be silent, nor to think of other matters : if any Question be hard through the Darknes of our Hearts, yet do not give it over, but search the closer, and study the case the more exactly ; and if it be possible let not our Hearts give over, till we have resolved the Question, and told us off or on in what case we are : yea wrestle with thy Heart till thou hast prevailed, and say I will not let thee go till thou

thou hast answered. He that can prevail with his own Heart, shall also be a Prevailer with God.

When we have discovered the truth of our State, then pass the Sentence accordingly. A meer Examination will do us little good, if we proceed not to a Judgment. Conclude as we find, either we are true Believers, or we are not; either we have a Title to Heaven, or that we have not: but pass not this Sentence with Self-flattery, nor from Melancholy Terrors and Fears.

1st. Not with Self-flattery. Alas! what will it profit us to quit our selves as the Children of God, when we visibly express the Power of Sin and Satan in our Lives?

2^{dly}. On the other side, pass not this Sentence from Melancholy Unbelief, Terrors, and Fears. As the carnal Man fails the former way, so the tempted Christian sometimes fails this way. In this case run we over our Evidences again and again, and proceed we from those that are more difficult, to those that are more easy. One Sign perhaps may be more easily perceived than another; and if we can but discover *some*, yea if but *one*, we may assuredly gather all the rest are there.

Come then, pass on now to *Sentence*: O, but implore the Spirit's Assistance; now if

34 *The Character and Trial*

ever let us desire him to shine on our Graces, and then speak groundedly and deliberately, and truly as we find according to our very Consciences! Do not conclude, as some do, I am a good Christian; or as others do, I am a Reprobate, or an Hypocrite, and shall be damned: When we have *no ground* for what we say, but our own Fancy, or Hopes, or Fears, let not our Judgment be any way bias'd or brib'd from sentencing aright.

Then he further adviseth, that we should labour to get our Hearts kindly affected with its discovered Condition, according to the Sentence pass'd on it. Do not think it enough to *know*, but labour to *feel* what God hath made us to see, if we find our selves *renewed* and *sanctified* indeed. O let us get this warm and close to our Hearts! bethink our selves what a blessed Estate hath the Lord brought us into, to be his Children, his Friends; to be pardoned, justified, and entitled to Life! Why? what is it we now need to fear but sinning against him! Come War, or Plague, or Sicknes, or Death, we are sure they can but thrust us into Heaven. Thus let us follow these Meditations till they have left their Impressions on our Hearts. Then he adviseth to record this Sentence so pass'd, to write it down, which

which now I desire to do this 18th of August 1676.

Having searched and tried my Heart yesterday, and at this time also, after I hope earnest and hearty Prayer to God, for the help of his Spirit to try my State and Condition, I did fall again to the Work of Self-trial by the fore-mentioned Particulars; and tho I cannot fully declare a positive Answer to *every Question*, yet, if my Heart doth not very much deceive me, I can to *most* of them; I hope I can, I beg of God I may not be deceived: It is some Comfort to me where I cannot so fully answer some of them, I hope I can truly say, I most heartily desire it may be so with me. And tho Grace be very weak in me, (which I hope I desire to be humbled and mourn for) yet I dare not deny God's Work in me; I must not deny the Day of small Things, but to the Glory of God must own, surely there is something of Good wrought in me by his Holy Spirit. And my Comfort is, *Christ will not quench the smoking Flax, nor break the bruised Reed*, Mat. 12. 20. I am not now affected with the discovery of my Condition as I should, and do not find at present inward Comfort in my Soul; I am and have been much under the With-
drawings

36 *The Character and Trial*

drawings of God for a time, by reason of my Apostacy and Backslidings from him, and not walking closely with him; yet I desire, I hope, to *lament after the Lord*, and not content my self, till I again meet with him. The Lord give me Grace to *wait* on him in a way of Duty, and to act Grace tho I want Comfort. O if I am but sincere, and wait still upon God, who can tell but he may return with Comfort to my poor Soul! The Lord help me to maintain Faith and Hope through Christ, *Tho I sit in Darknes and see no Light, yet to trust in the Lord and stay my self on my God*, Isa. 50. 10. The Lord help me now to walk answerable to the great Things he hath done for my poor Soul. I desire and hope I may have recourse to this hereafter, as I shall have need: And that it may be of Comfort to me for the time to come, as Mr. *Ambrose* adviseth: His words are; This Record will be very useful to us hereafter; if we find we have a Work of Grace in us, what a help will it be against the next Temptation to doubting and fear, to go and read under our Hands this Record? May we not think, if at such a time I found the truth of Grace, is it not likely to be now the same, and these Doubts to come from the Enemy of my Peace? Yet trust not so to *one Discovery*,

as

as to try no more: Especially if we have made any foul Defections from Christ, and play'd the Backsliders, see then that we renew the search again: neither let this hinder us in the daily search of our Ways, or of our increase in Grace, and Fellowship with Christ. It is an ill sign, and a desperate vile Sin, for a Man when he thinks he hath found himself gracious, and in a happy state, to let down his Watch, and grow negligent of his Heart and Ways, and scarce look after them any more. Neither should we give over in Discouragement, if we cannot at once or twice, or ten times trying discover our Case, but follow it on till we have discovered it; if one Hour or Day will not do, take another; if one Minister cannot direct us sufficiently, go to another; the Issue will answer all our Pains. There is no sitting down discouraged in a Work that must be done. If we have been Hypocrites, or ungodly Persons all our Lives, yet is the Promise offered to us by Christ, and he tenders himself to us, to be our Lord and Saviour; *neither can we possibly be so willing to accept him, as he is to accept us.* Nothing but our own Unwillingness can keep our Souls from Christ, tho we have hitherto abused him, and dissembled with him. O that the Lord would perswade

38 *The Character and Trial*

us to the close Performance of this self-trying Task, that we might not tremble with Horror of Soul when the Judg of all the World shall try us ; but have our Evidences so ready at hand, and be so able to prove our Title to Heaven, that the thoughts and approach of Death and Judgment might revive our Spirits, and fill us with Joy, and not apale us, and fill us with Amazement.

September the 19th, 1676. Finding my Heart very hard and dead of late, and being still under the Withdrawings of God, but I bless God, I hope sensible of it, and desirous to wait upon him for Discoveries of his Love and Favour, and to lament after him, and seek him in his Ordinances : (for I hope I cannot take up with Duty without something of God in it, at least some Quicknings and Drawings out of my Heart after him in earnest Desires, and Longings, and Pantings after him) yet I am apt to be cast down, my Conscience is apt to accuse me, that I do not my Duty, and am fearful lest Death come of a sudden, and find me unready, and thereupon am greatly troubled : and not knowing what to do, methinks I would not be wanting in my Duty, and often pray that God would shew me my Duty, and help me to do it :
yet

yet when I think to go about any thing, there comes such a multitude of things into my Mind, to do this, and to do the other, (and all cannot be done together) that I am sometimes almost discouraged, and tempted to let all alone. The Lord in infinite Mercy look upon me for Christ's sake, and help me against this Temptation of Satan, and my own wicked Heart, and enable me to remember the Lord is gracious and merciful, and accepts of the willing Mind, where there is Truth and Sincerity. The Lord help me also to remember, and believe, tho I must be doing, yet I am not justified for it, if I could do never so much. The Lord help me to renounce all, and trust wholly to Jesus Christ for Acceptance, for Justification, and Salvation. Now this Morning being in my Shop, and having nothing to do, (Trading being very dead) I thought with my self what to set about; and tho I have examined my self before, yet knowing I cannot be too much in this Work, I resolved to go to it again; and altho I cannot so solemnly search my Heart, as if I were in secret, yet I hope I find something of Mr. *Nalton's* Characters, which I shall here note.

Question. How may we know Christ is ours, and we are his?

Ans.

40 *The Character and Trial*

Ans. 1. Do you highly prize Jesus Christ?

2. Are you made new Creatures?

3. Do you find the Power of Corruption in some measure abated in you?

4. Are you desirous to have Christ rule over you as well as save you?

5. Dost thou lament after the Lord, and mourn over a crucified Saviour?

6. Do you feel Sin a Burden, and would you willingly be rid of it?

Quest. How may I know I love Christ?

Ans. 1. If you love Jesus Christ, you will be content with nothing but his Love again: All the World will not content you, without the Love of Christ.

2. If you love Jesus Christ, you will delight to think and speak of Christ.

3. If you love Christ, you will be afraid to offend him.

4. You will love the Saints and Followers of Christ.

5. You will delight to be where Christ is, in his Ordinances; and rejoice in his Presence when you meet with him.

6. Love to Christ will make you seek the Honour of Christ.

7. Your Lives will run out in lively actings and exercise of Grace upon Christ.

8. If you love Christ, you will not think any thing too much to do for Christ,

or

or to part with for him. *If you love me keep my Commandments*, saith Christ; so that if I keep Christ's Commandments, it is a sign that I love him.

Now follow *some Characters* that Mr. Nalton laid down of true Faith in Jesus Christ; but before these he gives some Rules to help us in trying our selves. 1. If you would judg aright of your Faith, besure you do not trust to your own Hearts. 2. Examine your Hearts when you are in a calm, quiet, composed Frame. 3. Take heed you do not err in the nature of Faith, to think there is *no true Faith*, where there is *no Assurance*. 4. Judg not of your Faith by some legal Troubles, that have been in your Spirits as a fore-runner of Faith; but judg by the Consequents of these Troubles, whether they bring Christ and your Souls nearer together. 5. Tho you must judg your Faith by *the Fruits* of it, yet they are in some of a higher degree, some of a lower degree. Joy in Tribulation is a high Fruit of Faith that every Man cannot attain unto. Let not a Man say, I have no Faith, because I cannot sing in a Prison; but if there be but any Fruit of Faith, that discovers to thee thou art a *Believer*, tho not a *strong Believer*, thou hast cause to rejoice.

Now

Now I hope my Desire is to try my self by these Marks of *true Faith* following. The Lord grant I may find them in my Soul for Christ's sake.

1st. True Faith may be known by the efficient or principal Cause of it, which is no other but the holy Spirit of God. All the Angels in Heaven and Saints on Earth cannot perswade my Heart to believe, till the Spirit of God draw my Soul to Jesus Christ. Now hath the Spirit of God drawn thee to Christ? Have you found the mighty Power of the Spirit of God overcoming the Pride and Stubbornness of your Wills, to make you willing to accept of Christ on his own Terms? then you have a true Faith.

2^{dly}. True Faith may be known by the manner of Production, the Spirit of God hath previous, or foregoing Work upon the Soul. 1. The Spirit of God *convinces* the Sinner; this goes before believing, the Spirit of God lets a Sinner see the inside of himself. Thou art a Sinner, saith the Spirit of God; so that the poor Sinner sees himself in a lost and undone Condition in himself by reason of Sin. 2. After convincing the Spirit of God *humbles* the Sinner, he is humbled to the Dust. This Sorrow and Humiliation is in some more, in some less, but in all there is so much

much sense of Sin and Misery, as to drive the Sinner out of himself, and to let him see he must perish for ever without Christ.

3. There is also an *incouraging Work* of the Spirit of God; having convinced and humbled the Sinner, he revives him by some Heart-cheering Considerations; as, (1.) That there is a Christ, an All-sufficient Saviour, by whom he may be delivered from Wrath to come. (2.) The Spirit of God makes a particular proffer of Christ, and Pardon, and Grace to him, and tells him the Promises of the Gospel are made to him, as well as others, and that God invites him poor Sinner, and that there is Mercy for him if he accept it.

(3.) The Spirit of God doth sometimes secretly whisper to the Soul of a Sinner, by a Voice within him, inviting him and drawing him to come to Christ: *Come to me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest: Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the Waters.* Art thou a thirsty Soul? thou art he that is invited, saith the Spirit of God; therefore stand out no longer. (4.) The Spirit of God doth work Faith by bowing the Will, making it pliable, to come and taste how good Christ is. Well, saith the Soul, I am resolved to come to Christ, tho I know not how I shall speed. I will cast my Soul into
the

the Arms of Christ ; and if I sink, I will sink with a Saviour in my Arms ; I will live or die with him. Now deal truly with your Souls, hath the Spirit of God wrought Faith in you in this manner ?

3dly. You may know the truth of Faith by its vital Act, which is *an hearty Consent to receive Christ* : it is a Conjugal Consent that makes your Faith a true Faith.

1. That is, when the Sinner hath regard to his Person as well as his Portion.
 2. When we receive him to be our Lord and Husband ; to be ruled by him as well as to be redeemed by him. 3. It excludes all other Partners, I will have Christ and none but Christ ; if I have him, I have enough. 4. It includes all Conditions. I am content to be his in Want as well as in Wealth, in Adversity as well as Prosperity, in Temptation as well as Consolation ; I am content to follow him through Dirt, and Mire, and Blood. 5. Such a Man yields to Christ out of Choice ; a Man willingly yields to Christ, he can say, I am thine wholly ; I have made *Choice* of thee to be my Portion, my Redeemer.

4thly. True Faith may be known by the *Fruits* of it : Some Fruits in reference to Christ, some in reference to our selves. The Fruits in reference to *Christ* are these.

1. True

1. True Faith will make you highly to prize Jesus Christ. You will set such a Price upon Christ that all the Beauty, and Bravery, and Pomp, and Glory of the World, all the Pleasures and Treasures in the World will be but a heap of Dung in comparison of him. The Person of Christ is exceeding precious, *Cant 5. 10. My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand; his Mouth is Sweetnesses, he is altogether lovely:* His Blood is very precious, his Offices very precious, his Graces very precious, an Interest in him is very precious, the Purchase of his Blood very precious; the Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away is very precious; all the Kingdoms of the World are not worthy to be compared to it.

2. True Faith will work *earnest, fervent, regular Desires after Christ*, and Communion with him. This is certain, where Faith is once wrought, the Soul is restless, till it rests in a Saviour. These *Desires* after Christ may be known by four Properties. (1.) By the *Ardency* of them, they are not weak and slight Desires, but commanding Desires, like the Desires of Hunger and Thirst that must be satisfied. Tell the Soul who desires Christ, that he shall have the World and Riches enough; no, saith he, that will not content me; give

give me Christ or else I die. Tell him of outward Comforts and Accommodations, these are not Christ, saith he. (2.) By the *Activity* of them: these Desires will not be sluggish lazy Desires, to look that Christ should drop into their Mouths without looking after him. But if you desire Christ indeed, you will earnestly seek him, as a Man that is hungry indeed will be ready to break through any Difficulties for Food. (3.) By the *Prevalency* of them. They will be prevalent and powerful Desires, they will make thee content to part with something for Christ. when Christ saith, I would have thee leave such a Lust, with all my Heart saith the Soul: When Christ saith, Follow me in any hard Duty, as the Duty of *Self-denial*; with all my Heart saith the Soul. *Moses* was content to part with all his Preferment for Christ; he counted the Reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of *Egypt*. (4.) By the *Constancy* of them. If your Desires are right, you will still be desiring more of Christ; you will never be so satisfied, as to say you have enough of him, but be hungry and thirsting still: *Psal.* 119. 20. *My Soul breaketh for the longing it hath to thy Judgments at all times.* A Man that hath tasted of the Sweetness of Christ;

O that I might taste more, saith he ! There is a thousand times more Sweetness in Christ than ever yet you tasted. He that saith he knows Christ so much, that he desires to know no more, I dare say he never tasted the Sweetness of Christ at all : For the more you have experienc'd, the more you will hunger after him, and desire him.

3. Another Fruit of Faith in reference to Christ is this, It will work an earnest, fervent *Love to Christ*, so that a Believer will love Jesus Christ above all things, and say, *Thy Loves are better than Wine*, Cant.

1. 2. It is said the Loadstone will not draw Iron in the presence of the Diamond ; so no outward Loadstone of Pleasure and Contentment can draw the Soul in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. When a Worldly Man doth boast, These are my Lands, and Houses, and Enjoyments : A Believer saith, all my Pleasures and Riches, and Jewels, are in *Jesus Christ*. As *Mephibosheth* said, 2 Kings 19. 30. *Let him take all, for as much as I have seen the Face of my Lord the King* : So saith a true Believer, let Worldly Men take all, so I may see the Face of my Lord, the King of Saints. When a Believer can draw out the Quintessence of all Creature-Comforts, and say the Sweetness of all is in Christ ; O how sweet is he then to that Soul !

Again ;

Again ; This true Faith will make a Man love Christ against all Difficulties and Temptations, and Discouragements he can meet with in Heaven's way. What tho I suffer Reproach for Christ, faith the Believer, yet I can love him still ; tho I suffer the loss of all my Estate for Christ, yet I can love him still : nay, tho I suffer the loss of my Life for Christ, yet I will love him still. *Acts 21. 13. I am ready not only to be bound, but to die for the Name of Christ.* This I confess is a high Act of Faith, but no higher than many Martyrs have attained to : They felt such a strong and unquenchable Love in Jesus Christ to their Souls ; therefore their Love was so drawn out to Christ again, which made them ready to suffer, and lay down their Lives for him.

Again ; True Faith will make a Man love Christ without outward Encouragements. A Believer can say, what tho I want these outward Accommodations others have, tho I be as poor as Job on the Dunghil, yet a *Naked Christ* is to me more welcome than a beautified World, that is deck'd with all the Plenty and Prosperity, that can be imagined. As the strongest Believer, he that hath assurance of Christ's Love, may love Christ more strongly ; yet it is as true, he

he that is the weakest Believer, tho he knows not whether he be beloved of Christ, he loves Christ as *truly* as the other.

4. Another Fruit of Faith, is a *fear of offending him*. True Faith would not have Christ displeased; it is true, Faith calls out a slavish Fear, but a Fear of Reverence and Watchfulness is the Fruit of true saving Faith.

5. True Faith will work *Holiness* and *new Obedience*. Hence Faith is called a *most holy Faith*, because it makes us holy; we are sanctified by Faith.

6. True Faith works *Patience*, not only Patience in waiting, but Patience in suffering: There is a Patience in waiting for the Accomplishment of the Promises. Faith saith to a Believer, the things thou waitest for are worth thy waiting for them; the Comforts thou desirest, the Crown of Glory thou expectest is worth waiting for: Again, Faith works Patience in suffering, *Heb. 10. 34. They took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, knowing they had in Heaven a more induring Substance. Heb. 11. 36, 37. They endured the trial of cruel Mockings, of Scourgings, of Bonds, and Imprisonments: They were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the Sword; they wandred about in Sheep-skins, and Goat-*

skins, being destitute, forsaken, tormented: and yet their Faith in Jesus Christ carried them through all these Sufferings. Faith tells the Soul, the Sufferings of this present Life are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed.

7. True Faith will work *an undaunted Profession of Christ's Name.* He will profess Christ openly when called to it. The Disciples professed Christ when it was Death to do so. *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ,* saith the Apostle: I esteem the Reproach of Christ better than the Glory of the World; and the Cross of Christ better than the Crowns of the World: I esteem his Crown of Thorns better than all others in this World. *I bear about me the Marks of the Lord Jesus,* Gal. 6. 17. he calls his Sorrows and Sufferings *the Marks of Christ*; I esteem them my greatest Honour: *God forbid,* saith he, *I should glory in any thing but in the Cross of Jesus Christ.* Thus you see what Fruits Faith works in reference to Jesus Christ.

Now there are Fruits of Faith in reference to *our selves*, as these following.

1. True Faith works abundance of *inward Peace and Joy*: Rom. 5. 1. *Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God.* And it must needs be so, because that Faith tells the Soul the Bond is cancelled, that

that Sin is pardoned, the Burden is taken off, Wounds of Conscience are healed with the Wounds of Christ. A Believer can say, In Peace will I lay down my Head in the Bosom of Christ. When Storms and Waves arise, a Believer can sit in his Ark; Christ and a good Conscience is an Ark for a poor Soul, where he is safe. A true Believer hath always the Ground of Joy, tho not always the Exercise of it.

2. Another Fruit of Faith in reference to our selves, is *Boldness in coming to the Throne of Grace*: We have Boldness and Access by Faith in Christ, *Ephes. 3. 12.* A true Believer can pour out his Soul to God, make his Moan to his Father. It is his Comfort he can go to his Father with a Childlike Boldness and Confidence.

3. Another Fruit of Faith is *Contempt of the World*; *Acts 4. They sold their Possessions, and brought the Money, and laid it down at the Apostles Feet*: They regarded it no more than the Dirt under their Feet. Faith hath an Eagle's Eye, it sees things afar off; and an Eagle's Wing, to carry a Man above the Flatteries and the Frowns of the World. By Faith *Moses feared not the Frowns of the King, Heb. 11.*

27. Faith lets a Man see there is better

52 *The Character and Trial*

to be found in Christ, than in the whole World. He that can find a World in Christ, will be willing to part with all the World for Him.

4. True Faith will produce a strong Desire of strengthening and increasing it, and that both in Truth and Growth. It will make a Man still be searching his Heart that he may be sure he hath the Truth of Faith. It makes a Man prize a Soul searching Ministry, that may plough up the Fallow Ground of his Heart: And it works a desire of Growth also, it makes a Believer pray, *Lord! increase my Faith* whether thou increase my Trade and Wealth or no; however Lord increase my Faith.

After I had wrote these things I went into my Closet, and there begged of God his Help and Assistance to try my self by these Characters, and then spent a little time going over them, and trying my State by them; and I bless the Lord I now cannot but say to his Glory, that I find them in some measure in me. I hope that those I could not so positively answer to, yet I could in the Desire of my Soul: I hope in the Lord I am not deceived. If I am, I beseech him for Christ's sake to undeceive me, and let me know how it stands with me: But methinks God hath begun some

good Work in me, and wrought Faith in my poor Soul, tho it is very weak. The Lord humble me, and the Lord help me to bless his holy Name for the least Grace; and earnestly to endeavour and beg of him the Increase of it. I hope in the Lord I may have recourse to what I have done this Day (and what is entered before) in a time of Doubts and Fears, in an hour of Trouble, under God's Withdrawings; yea, that I may have Comfort from it in an hour of Death. The Lord grant I may not now be secure and careless, but that I may walk very closely and exactly before him, to his Praise and Glory here, till at last I come to live with him in his Heavenly Kingdom.

May the 9th, 1678. I spent the Day in a secret Fast. One End, among others, I proposed to my self in it, was, to search into the State of my Soul again; also that I may be inabled to suffer for Christ if I am called to it, &c.

I hope I desired to be sincere and hearty, I tried my self by the Marks and Characters before set down: I hope I can say upon search, that the Lord hath wrought saving Grace in me; it was I hope my hearty Prayer that if it was not so, I might not so enter it here; but I trust the Lord hath turned me from Darkness to

Light, and that I am not dead in Sins and Trespases, but there is a Principle of Life in me ; the Lord grant I may not be deceived. Towards the close of the Day I read over *my Covenant*, and hope I did from my very Heart desire to bewail the Breach of it, and to renew it with the Lord ; which I did, I hope, in the strength of his Grace, desiring Christ may be my Surety, being much afraid of my being deceived, lest it should be with me as heretofore. I hope I did heartily take the Lord for my God, and give up my self unto him ; and bind my self to forsake all Sin, and to live more to his Glory, according to the Covenant I entred into with the Lord about eleven Years since (*taken out of Mr. Allen's Book.*) I bless God I was assisted to Day in the Work I undertook ; the Lord accept of me through Christ, and let not this Day be lost. O that I may not prove false and hypocritical with him ! but go away enabled to live more to his Praise here, till I come to be for ever with him hereafter.

January the 30th, 1682. I spent this Day in a secret Fast in my Closet ; the main End I proposed to my self, was to search again my Heart, to find out whether there was a Work of Grace wrought

in

in me or no: also that I might get Corruption more subdued that is yet strong in me; and that I may be inabled to suffer for Christ if I am called to it, &c. I hope I desired to be hearty in the Work, tho Hardness and Deadness was too much upon me. The Lord forgive; I hope I may say to the Glory of God, that he hath begun that good Work in me, that he will perfect to the Day of Christ: I did earnestly beg of the Lord that I might not be deceived, and I hope I am not. I trust the Lord hath pluck'd me out of a Natural Estate, and turned my Heart from Sin unto himself. The Lord grant I may now live answerable to the great things he hath done for me, and keep the Covenant I have this Day renewed.

January the 30th, 1684. I kept as a Fast, and spent a good part of the Morning in secret Prayer: after Family-Duty, I went to hear a Sermon, and then back to my Closet, where I spent the rest of the Day. The Ends I proposed to my self were, that God would help me against Worldliness, and distrust of his Providence (for I have been much troubled of late by reason of many Losses, and Trade being fallen almost to nothing) and quiet my Mind, and enable me to trust him, and withal, direct

56 *The Character and Trial*

rect me how to proceed as to Earthly Things; having some thoughts of leaving this House. And I desired also to be fitted for the Lord's-Supper, and that I might have Strength to suffer whatever God should call me to. And in reference to the Publick, I desired to seek God for Mercy to his Church, and to these Nations.

I began with reading some Portion of God's Word, then examined my self of the State of my Soul, by some Characters of Grace in this Book. I hope I desired heartily the help of God, and earnestly begg'd I might give a right Judgment of my self, and was afraid of doing otherwise. I hope I may say to God's Glory, surely there is somewhat of a Work of Grace that he hath graciously wrought in my Soul, and that I am not dead in Trespasses and Sins. Blessed, O blessed be his Name!

I am not affected as I ought, but am apt to fear still, knowing my Heart is deceitful. The Lord help me to be much in this trying Work; for I cannot make too sure of my Salvation. The Lord remove Doubts and Fears, and strengthen my Faith in him and in his Promises. After *Self-examination*, I spent the rest of my time in *Prayer*, and hope I was hearty

heartly therein. The Lord hear my poor Prayers for my self, for my Children, and for the Publick. I also read over *my Covenant*, entred into with the Lord many Years since, and I renewed Covenant with God. The Lord help me to live answerably; and that Sin may be more subdued, and Grace strengthened; that I may find the Benefit of this Day while I live, and be fitted for the everlasting Enjoyment of God in Glory.

February the 6th, 1685. I kept a Fast by my self. The main thing I had upon my Heart, was the low Estate of the Church, and of these Nations; as also to search into the State of my Soul, to get my Heart more taken off the World, to have Corruption mortified, and be enabled to suffer for Christ, if called to it, and never to forsake him. I bless God, I had his Assistance, and hope I was hearty in the Work; and that upon trial I may say, God hath begun a good Work, which he will carry on and perfect to the Day of Jesus Christ. O that I might make more sure of Christ, and Grace, and Heaven! especially when I can make sure of nothing below, but am at such Uncertainties as to all outward things. The Lord help me to live in some measure answerable

ble to his great Mercies, and to keep the Covenant with him that I have this day renewed.

Things whereby a Man may examine and judg of himself. 1. If you would be saved, you must by deep and serious Repentance forsake the World and Sin, and turn to God in Christ, and firmly believe in him. 2. You must resign and devote your self to be the Lord's. 3. You must take the Favour of God for your Happiness. 4. You must be diligent in the use of all holy Means and Duties. 5. You must study the Scriptures, to know God's Mind, and do it. 6. The whole Course of your Lives will be set to please and honour God. Now examine whether you are like to be saved. How is it, O my Soul, as to these things? Do I go in the broad Way or not? Let not the Devil keep you from this Self-Examination; if he can prevail for that, you may make a great Profession, and do many things, and yet perish for ever.

Judg of thy self by these things, and seriously enquire; 1. Whether Eternal Salvation have the Preheminence of your Esteem and Choice, that you prefer it before all Worldly Prosperity? 2. Is the obtaining of this Salvation, and preparing for

for it, the great Business of your Lives? 3. Under the sense of Sin, do you give up your selves to Christ, as the only Physician of Souls, to heal, and help, and save you? 4. Is it the sincere Desire of your Souls, that you may be saved from *Sin*, as well as *Hell*? from the Power and Practice of Sin, as well as from the Wrath of God? 5. What is the Matter of thy *Comfort*? Is it to converse with God? to look up to him with hope of his Acceptance? Doth the Light of God's Countenance give thee more Joy than the Increase of Riches? Canst thou say from thy Heart, thou hadst rather be poor, and despised, and miserable in this World, with God's Favour, than to be the greatest Person in the World, and God to be thine Enemy? Examine by such things as these.

O let me be in earnest for Christ and Grace, and never rest till it be put out of doubt, that God in Christ is my God, and that he hath made an *everlasting Covenant* with me! If this be not, I am undone for ever! But this I must obtain, or my Soul shall be in Bitterness before the Lord while I have a Being! Nothing shall comfort me while I am Graceless, and without Christ! I am resolved for Him,

Him, his Grace and Favour against all Denials. If God will not let me see the Good of his Chosen, and reveal his Christ and Grace in me, *I will mourn, I will mourn*, while I live! If God will not comfort me, nothing else shall! If I may not find Rest and Peace in Christ, I will have none at all! If God will take no Pleasure in me, I will take none in my self! My Tears shall be my Meat continually! I will go mourning in this World while I have a Day to live, till Christ shall please to cast an Eye of Grace and Mercy on me! Nay, let it come to this, *I cannot live* if God be not reconciled! If Christ be not mine, my Spirit fails! if the Lord do not relieve me, there is nothing; no abiding for me, unless he speak a word of Peace! When the Soul is brought to this, I must have an Interest in Christ, or nothing will satisfy me; such an one shall find Acceptance: Therefore be in good earnest, and let the Desires of the Soul rise up to an holy Restlessness. O wretched Negligence, that we can let the greatest Concerns of our Souls lie at hazard all our days!

Ten Questions to ask our Hearts. Thus Mr. Steel advis'd we should often commune with our Hearts. I. What have I been, if

now.

now I am changed? I was a wretched Sinner! II. What Good have I done, that God may have the Glory, and I the Comfort? III. How have I done it? IV. What have I neglected? The slothful Servant is condemn'd, who had Talents, but did no good with them. What Duties have I neglected, and how many Opportunities of doing good omitted? V. What State am I in? Am I in a gracious or sinful State, in Christ or in my Sins: if I am in Christ, he rules; if in Sin, that reigns. VI. What Frame am I in? Am I in a gracious or worldly Frame of Heart? VII. What do I? Am I in my Calling, and in the way of my Duty? Am I now doing the Will of God? VIII. Whither am I going? towards Heaven or Hell? Every moment I take a step to one of them. IX. How far am I on my way to Heaven? X. What shall I do to be saved? Salvation is to be had, how shall I attain it?

His Covenant with God.

O Most Dreadful God! for the Passion of thy Son, I beseech Thee accept of thy poor Prodigal, now prostrating himself at thy Door: I have fallen from Thee by mine Iniquity,

quity, and am by Nature a Son of Death, and a thousandfold more the Child of Hell by my wicked Practice; but of thine Infinite Grace Thou hast promised Mercy to me in Christ, if I will but turn to Thee with all my Heart! Therefore upon the Call of thy Gospel I am now come in, and throwing down my Weapons, submit my self to thy Mercy! And because Thou requirest, as the Condition of my Peace with Thee, that I should put away mine Idols, and be at Defiance with all thine Enemies, which I acknowledg I have wickedly sided with against Thee; I here from the bottom of my Heart renounce them all, firmly Covenanting with Thee, not to allow my self in any known Sin, but to use conscientiously all the Means that I know Thou hast prescribed, for the Death and utter Destruction of all my Corruptions. And whereas I have formerly inordinately and idolatrously let out my Affections upon the World, I do here resign my Heart to Thee that madest it, humbly protesting before thy Glorious Majesty, That it is the firm Resolution of my Heart, and that I do unfeignedly desire Grace from Thee; that when Thou shalt call me hereunto, I may practise this my Resolution, through thy Assistance, to forsake all that is dear unto me in this World, rather than to turn from Thee to the Ways of Sin; and that I will watch against all its Temptations, whether of Prospe-
rity

rity or Adversity, lest they should withdraw my Heart from Thee; beseeching Thee also to help me against the Temptations of Satan, to whose wicked Suggestions I resolve, by thy Grace, never to yield my self a Servant. And because my own Righteousness is but menstruous Rags, I renounce all Confidence therein, and acknowledg that I am of my self a hopeless, helpless, undone Creature, without Righteousness or Strength.

And for as much as Thou hast of thy bottomless Mercy offered most graciously to me wretched Sinner, to be again my God through Christ, if I would accept of Thee: I call Heaven and Earth to record this Day, that I do here solemnly avouch Thee for the Lord my God; and with all possible Veneration, bowing the Neck of my Soul under the Feet of thy most Sacred Majesty, I do here take Thee the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for my Portion and Chief Good; and do give up my self, Body and Soul for thy Servant, promising and vowing to serve Thee in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of my Life. And since Thou hast appointed the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Means of coming unto Thee, I do here upon the bended Knees of my Soul, accept of him as the only new and living Way, by which Sinners may have Access to Thee, and do here solemnly join my self in a Marriage-Covenant to him.

64 The Character and Trial

O Blessed Jesus ! I come to Thee hungry and hardly bestead, poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked; a most loathsome polluted Wretch, a guilty condemned Malefactor, unworthy for ever to wash the Feet of the Servants of my Lord, much more to be solemnly married to the King of Glory : but sith such is thine unparalleld Love, I do here with all my Power accept Thee, and do take Thee for my Head and Husband, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, for all Times and Conditions, to love, and honour, and obey Thee before all others, and this to the Death. I imbrace Thee in all thine Offices ; I renounce my own Worthiness, and do here avow Thee for the Lord my Righteousness ; I renounce mine own Wisdom, and do here take Thee for my only Guide ; I renounce my own Will, and take thy Will for my Law. And since Thou hast told me that I must suffer if I will reign, I do here Covenant with Thee, to take my Lot as it falls with Thee, and by thy Grace assisting, to run all hazards with Thee, verily purposing, that neither Life nor Death shall part between Thee and Me.

And because Thou hast been pleased to give me thy holy Laws, as the Rule of my Life, and the Way in which I should walk to thy Kingdom ; I do here willingly put my Neck under thy Yoke, and set my Shoulder to thy Burden ;
and

and subscribing to all thy Laws, as holy, just, and good, I solemnly take them as the Rule of my Words, Thoughts, and Actions, promising that tho my Flesh contradict and rebel, yet I will endeavour to order and govern my whole Life according to thy Direction, and will not allow my self in the neglect of any thing that I know to be my Duty: Only because through the frailty of my Flesh, I am subject to many Failings, I am bold humbly to protest, that unallowed Miscarriages, contrary to the settled Bent and Resolution of my Heart, shall not make void this Covenant; for so Thou hast said.

Now Almighty God, Searcher of all Hearts, Thou knowest that I make this Covenant with Thee this Day, without any known Guile or Reservation, beseeching Thee, that if Thou espieest any Flaw or Falshood therein, Thou wouldst discover it to me, and help me to do it aright.

And now Glory be to Thee, O God the Father, whom I shall be bold from this Day forward, to look upon as my God and Father, that ever thou shouldst find out such a way for the Recovery of undone Sinners! Glory be to Thee, O God the Son, who hast loved me, and washed me from my Sins in thy own Blood, and art now become my Saviour and Redeemer! Glory be to Thee, O God the Holy Ghost, who by the Finger of thine Almighty Power,

66 *The Character and Trial*

Power, hast turned about my Heart from Sin to God.

O Dreadful Jehovah! the Lord God Omnipotent, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Thou art now become my Covenant-Friend, and I, through thine Infinite Grace, am become thy Covenant-Servant. Amen: So be it. And the Covenant which I have made on Earth, let it be ratified in Heaven.

April 11, 1667.

HENRY GEARING.

A Pathetical Meditation on the Passion of Christ, taken out of Mr. Wadsworth's Remains, 8°. abridged and transcribed for his own use, upon Sacramental Occasions.

AWay all trifling Worldly Business,
I must go see my bleeding Lord!
Come now, my Soul, look yonder, thou
wilt soon arrive at bloody *Golgotha*, where
thou shalt see thy bleeding dying Saviour
to sigh and linger out a dying Life on the
Cross, in Love for thee! This, this might,
O my Soul, have been thy Day in which
thou mightst have drunk the bitter Cup
of the fierce Anger of God! But look
yonder,

yonder, there he goes that must drink up the Dregs and all for thee! But come, my Soul, draw up a little nearer, stand here and thou wilt see him passing: Look! there he goes with a Train of Virgins following: But see how cruelly these barbarous Jews do use him, they make him bear his Cross himself! See how they laugh and scoff and wag their Heads, as if he were their May-game! Look! see, my Soul, come, tell me what thou seest. O I cannot, Sorrow ties my Tongue, I cannot speak; I see a Troop of Virgins following him, their weeping Eyes, their blubbering Lips, their Sighs and Throbbings speak them Mourners! I see my Lord looks towards them, and kindly chides their loving Sorrow; *Weep not for me!* Ay, could they do less than weep to see thine innocent Self among a Herd of Tygers? But whither, O whither, O ye blinded Jews, are ye dragging this my Lord! my Spirit begins to faint, I now can look no longer; my Heart now begins to swell with Grief, it must now break, or I must vent it at my Eyes in Streams. Look! see the Hammer and Nails, the Hammer lift up to strike: Bloody Man, thou durst not strike sure! surely thou dost not know whose Hands and Feet thou art now piercing, it is the Prince and Saviour of the World!

but

68 *The Character and Trial*

but look, see, it is done ! The Nails are driven to the Head : see how the Blood runs trickling down his Hands and Feet ; and see how hardned Hearts are laughing at it ! O silly foolish blinded Men, what laugh yet ! see, this very Christ you now mock shall be your Judg ! But come again, look and see, my Soul, what is become of thy nailed and crucified Lord ! Ha me ! he is not quite dead ; look how he gasps and pants for Life ! O how pale and wan do I see his Cheeks, methinks he should be dead ! for see how weak his Neck is grown, that it is not able to support his Head that lies a dying on his bleeding Breast : What yet not dead ! see how he shakes and stirs his dying Limbs ! What Gasps and Groans do I hear him fetch ! Hark, hark, he speaks ! O let me catch the last Breath of my dying Saviour ! What saith my Lord ? What ? *My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me ?* He hath been all this while a drinking up the Cup his Father gave him ; the bitter, sowre Cup of his Father's Wrath, which I and all the World had else drank. But must he indure all this ? Must he be crowned with Thorns, and Sweat, and bleed, and die, and all *for me* ? this I stand amazed at ! But there was necessity for all this ; either he must be thus dealt with,

with, or else my Sins could not be pardoned : he must drink up this bitter Cup with all its Dregs, or else I must have drunk it up my self. It was I that sinned and must have suffered ! This cursed proud and earthly Heart of mine rebelled, and broke the Laws, and should have suffered and born the Punishment. Had not he stept in and born the Stroke off from me, I had been now burning in everlasting Flames, and been lingring out this time in Torments, which I am now spending in the sweet Thoughts of my Escape. Hath not the Prophet said all this in *Isa. 53.* these *Wounds, Stripes, Bruises* he bore for thee ; O amazing Love and Grace, the Son of God loved me better than his Life ! Was ever Love like to his Love ? he was a Stranger to me ; Why did he not let me die ? but he loved me ; I was a polluted Sinner, methinks he should have loathed me, but he did wash me and make me clean again. But why hid he love an Enemy ? or how could he do it ? I know not why, O inexpressible Love ! O Love past Thoughts ! he loves because he will love ! What ails my Heart, I cannot find it stir ! What ? dead under the reviving Thoughts of thy dearest Redeemer ! Arise, shake up thy self and look about thee, thou dost not sure see thy
Mercy !

Mercy ! Come away, O come away, lift up thy drowfy Head, I will make thee look and love, and e're I leave thee confess thou lovest him ! Suppose now for thy Sins the Vengeance of God was just seizing upon thee, turning thee into Hell, and Christ comes and reveals himself to thee. *Sinner*, I love thee ! I say thou shalt not die ; Come, feel my Heart how it beats towards thee ! Dost thou not see I have left my Throne, and am come down to the Bar, where thou standest condemned ! But why dost thou weep ? Come, let me wipe thine Eyes, and bind up thy bleeding and despairing Heart ! I tell thee thou shalt not die. If Heaven will have Blood, it shall have mine, so it will but spare thine ! Now the Soul hath not a word to speak against this Love. Thy Son, O God, hath offered Satisfaction, and thou hast accepted it. Thou, O my Saviour, hast laid down thy Life for mine, and thy Father and my Father is well pleased with it. Blood is paid, Justice is satisfied, Heaven's Doors are widened, thine Arms opened to receive me, nothing is wanting but my Heart ; make it such as thou wilt have it, and then take it to thy self ! Come, *my Soul*, the Father thou seest is willing, and the Son is willing, give but thy Consent and he is thine

thine for ever: Fear not thy Hardness, Deadness, Blindness, Loathsomness, all these cannot hinder if thou be but willing: What stickest thou at? what dost ail? half of this ado would fetch a Heart for the World, a little Mire and Dirt; and is not Christ far better?

The Dress for the Sacrament.

Lord, where am I! What? all the Children of the Bride-Chamber up and drest, and I slumbring in my Bed! Tell me, ye fairest, what make you up so early? Alas! our Lord was up before us all; he called us up by break of Day, and wondered that we were not trimming our Lamps, knowing with whom we were to feast this day! Well then, I will rise up too! O, what a Shew do these bright and glittering Saints make in my Eyes! surely they did not thus dress themselves: It was my Father made them thus prepared to entertain his Son. But where are my Clothes? now for the fairest, sweetest Robe of Thoughts, and Wishes that can be found. O how naked am I! but where are my Silken, Golden Twists of Faith, to hang the Jewels of Joy, and Love, and Humility upon? I am never drest till they
be

be on ! O where are they ? I saw them by me but just now ; I laid them by my Heart before I went to Bed : But ah ! I fear this envious World hath with her Vanities stolen them away, or the envious Devil, or Unbelief hath been ravelling or snarling of them, that now I am as far to seek as ever. Whither, O whither, shall I go to find them out ! Now will the Bridegroom come, and I am not ready ! I cannot, dare not go to day ; now will my Lord be angry, and ask me why I came not, and I have no Answer to make him ; and if I go undrest, he will ask me where is my Wedding-Garment ; and then I shall be speechless ? Ah ! foolish, simple Heart, that thou shouldst let these Thoughts of Earth so entangle themselves ; with thy Heavenly Meditations, how to get them loose again thou knowst not ; this by Care thou mightest have prevented. Now what help ? Lord, I have sinned ! O holy Father, pardon this time, and I will take more heed ! O come and untie my Thoughts from this Earth, and come and dress me up as best pleaseth thee ! Come, be not discouraged, O my Soul, let but thy Attire of Grace be whole, *that is*, sincere, and thy God and Saviour will accept thee, tho thy Garments are not so much perfumed with
Heaven

Heaven as thy Brethrens are, thy Lord knows all have not Talents alike; and where he gives but little, he expects but little; thou hast an honest willing serious Heart, that thinks it doth despise and trample under Feet the nearest, dearest Pleasures, Profits, and Glories in the World, compared with him that gave himself to Death for thee, and hadst rather anger all the World than him, by sinning against him in the least: If this be true, fear not, thou hast thy Wedding-Garment on, thou art well clad; as mean soever as it is, it is such an one as Heaven gave thee, and such an one as thy dear Redeemer can and will imbrace thee in.

The Presence-Chamber.

Fear not, O my Soul, I charge thee; do not faint; let not thy Weakness and the Poverty of thy Grace discourage thee; see how thy Lord draws nigh; O he comes, and it is but to welcome thee, and fall about thy Neck and kiss thee, and bid thee a kind welcome to thy bleeding Lord!

The Bread.

Welcome Fairest ! take and eat, it is the sweetest Dainties, dearest Morsel Heaven can afford thee. Welcome my Dear to the Table of thy Lord ! welcome a thousand times I bid thee ; yea welcomer than thine own Heart can wish : take, eat this Morsel, it costs my Life, it is a Portion thy Father sent unto thee by me, and bid me remember thee of his Love to thee : he bids thee remember a Father's Love, I a Saviour's ; he hath a Heart to give thee, and so have I, take this in earnest of them both in one : take freely, if thou wert not welcome, I would have told thee, I would have ask'd thee for thy Wedding-Garment ! Tell me, O tell me, dost thou not love me ? I know thou dost : and wilt not thou take the Cross and follow me ? I know thou wilt : I heard thee, and had Compassion on thy Groanings ; I know thee well enough, thou art mine, and I am thine ; take it, I charge thee eat it as thou lovest me ; and while thou feedest, remember the Love of thy dearest Redemer.

The Wine.

Come, my Dearest, I have drunk and thou shalt pledg me ; I have broached my Sides,

Sides, and drew it on purpose for thee ; this is a Wine of my own making when I trod the Wine-Press of my Father's Wrath ; it is my Blood, take and drink it ; it was the Cause of my wounding, but to thy Soul it shall prove healing ; I died and bled to make this Banquet for thee, I have brought thee into my Wine-Cellar, and my Banner over thee shall be Love : fear not, take and drink ; thou hast an Ulcer in thy Heart, and this shall cure it ; thy Spirits are faint, this shall revive thee ; drink, I charge thee drink on thy Love and Loyalty to me ; I command thee as thou wilt have thy Heart to mend, thy Wounds to be cured, thy Spirits to revive, thy Fears to scatter, thy Soul to love and obey me ! Take, O take this Cup into thy Hand ; taste it, and praise my Name !

*Memorable Sayings and Passages collected, and transcribed for his own use.
These are some among others.*

WHat we are afraid to do before Men, we should be afraid to think before God ; because our secret Thoughts are as obvious to the Eyes of God, as our Actions to the Eyes of Men.

76 *The Character and Trial*

God shewed more Mercy in saving *some*, when he might have condemned *All*, than he did Justice in leaving *some* to perish, when he might have saved *none*.

Great Vertues without Sincerity of Heart are rejected, when great Infirmities without Hypocrisy are pardon'd.

A good Intention cannot make a bad Action good; tho an ill Intention may make an Action in it self good, to be evil.

He who presumes to sin in hopes of *Repentance*, shall be sure to repent, because he presumes.

They who presume most in a time of Prosperity, are most apt to despair in Adversity.

Repent *one day before thou diest* was good Counsel, I know not when that Day will be; therefore I will repent *to Day*, lest it should be too late *to Morrow*. He that delays his Repentance one Day, hath another Day more to repent of, and one Day less to do it in.

God who joins the End and Means together, doth accomplish all his Purposes of Good to us, by working in us Desires and Endeavours futable to those Purposes.

Better go to Heaven by the Gates of Hell, than to Hell by the Gate of Heaven; mourning to the Heavenly Glory, than

than laughing to the place of Torment.

One may suffer, and not sin ; but if he sin, he shall be sure to suffer.

Herod might have kept his Oath, and not have cut off the Baptist's Head ; he only promised to grant what she ask'd to the half of his Kingdom, whereas the Prophet's Head was more worth than the whole.

Such is the infinite Extent and Value of our Saviour's Merit, that tho a Man had the Guilt of as many Sins lying on his Soul, as there be drops of Water in the Ocean ; and if they were of as long continuance as from the Creation of the World, and aggravated with as hainous Circumstances as any of the vilest Sinners in Hell, yet there is Merit enough in the Blood of Christ to take away the Guilt of all those Sins ; and when that is done, Merit enough left to purchase as great a Glory as any Saint in Heaven enjoys. But let none thereupon presume to go on in Sin, for there is not a word of Comfort in the whole Bible for such an one.

He that is afraid of too much Grace, hath none at all. He who is unwilling to be made better, is not yet good.

In the most afflicted Condition of a Saint, he hath more reason to question

78 *The Character and Trial*

his own Love to God, than God's Love to him.

God takes as much Care of every one of his Children, as if he had but one to care for.

Our Times are in the Hand of God. If they were in our Enemies Hands, our Afflictions and Trials would be too long; if in our own, too short: but because in the Hand of God, Deliverance shall be reasonable, and in due time.

Had we ten thousand Lives and Estates to lose and lay down for Christ, one hour's Communion with him in Glory will recompense for all our Self-denial, whatever we have done or suffered.

That Man lives unlawfully, who doth not sometimes abstain from lawful things.

Make it thy Business to act Grace, and then trust God to bring in Comfort.

God is yours, if you are unfeignedly willing to be his: He that can from his Heart say, *Lord, I am thine!* may on good grounds be assur'd that the Lord is his God.

That Man whom God cannot satisfy, nothing can; for God is to his People whatever they can desire or need: Sight to the Blind, Bread to the Hungry, Clothing to the Naked, Strength to the Weak, a Physician to the Sick, Pardon to the Guilty, Comfort to the Mourners,
Life

Life in Death, and Everlasting Life after Death.

When the Devil suggested to a good Man, that it was in vain for him to mind God, for he should never get to Heaven: He replied, I will then follow hard after him, and keep close to him, that I may enjoy as much as possible of God here on Earth.

Where Sin lies heavy, every Affliction will be light.

'Twas the saying of the Noble Marques of *Vico*, Their Money perish with them, who think all the Wealth in the World worth one hour's Communion with Jesus Christ.

Since no Man can see thee and live, Lord! let me die, said an holy Man, that I may see thee, and be with thee.

If your Condition be never so low, if your Hearts be lower, it is well enough, the Issue will be good. And while God the Fountain is left, you need not much complain for want of a broken Cistern.

While others live *without God* in the World, a Christian should endeavour to live *as without the World*, in and upon his God.

The same Love of God which leads one Christian into the Wine-Cellar, and gives him assurance, may lead another into a

80 *The Character and Trial*

Prison, for the trial and exercise of his Grace.

In Prayer, if a Man have not a care of the first Wandrings of his Heart from God, he will hardly be able to recover himself afterwards.

'Twas a memorable Saying of a Great Man, *He may be deceived, who thinks to save any thing by his Religion more than his Soul.*

Before a Man is humbled he complains of God's Unkindness to him, but afterwards of his own to God.

God had one Son *without any Sin*, our Blessed Redeemer, but never any Son without some Affliction and Suffering.

Blessed be God we have any thing to deny, or lose, or count nothing for Christ.

A Believer prays with Fervency as if he would not be delay'd, and then waits patiently as if he had not prayed.

If you can say God is your God, and all that is in the World is his, how can you fear want? If he be not *All-sufficient*, why do you call him so? if he be, why do you not trust him?

If the Lord be good to the Soul that *seeks* him, how good is he to the Soul that *finds* him.

If, saith *Jerom*, my Father and Mother did with Tears intreat me, and my Wife hang about my Neck, and my Children fall

fall at my Feet, to beseech me to forsake Christ, I would cast them all off, Father, Mother, Wife and Children, and say, *Farewel all, welcome Christ.*

THE following Account of the Conversion of his Niece, will give farther Testimony to his Charity, Zeal and Diligence to promote Religion in his Family; and how God honoured him by the Lustre of an holy Example, to recommend serious Godliness to those who saw his Conversation, and by his seasonable Counsels to assert the Recovery of one, who, under great Convictions and Temptations, was in danger to be lost, by too long concealing of the State of her Case from such as could advise and direct her.

A short Account of the Conversion of Mrs. P. F. as she left it under her Hand before her Death.

I Am now going about to call to mind the great Mercy and Goodness of the Lord towards me, the unworthiest of all his Servants, to record his Loving-Kindness, and to make mention of the

many and great Deliverances I have had. I know not where to begin, nor where to make an end: I am even swallowed up in Admiration, and ready to cry out with *David*, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits?* especially when I consider my own Vileness by Nature; and how I deserved to be cast into Hell as soon as I was born, as having an Heart full of Sin, Vanity, and Rebellion against God, being conceived in Sin, and born in Iniquity. And as if this had not been enough, I have added numberless most hainous Transgressions. I have reason to bewail the Sins of my Thoughts; I was thinking Thoughts of Pride and Vanity as soon as I could think: I was running away from God as soon as I could go, with my Back towards Heaven, and my Face towards Hell. After I came to Years of Discretion, the more I knew of God, the more I sinned against him. The Sins of my Youth have been innumerable, and very hainous in their Nature; so that I have cause to pray with *David*, *Lord, remember not against me the Sins of my Youth!* O the precious Time I have lost! and the Golden Opportunities that I have squandred away! The Light and Love, the Mercies and Means of Grace that I have sinned against! I have spent the best of my Years

in

in the Service of Sin, and in the Neglect of the great Concerns of my Soul.

I confess, when I was but a Child, since I had any Understanding, I had always some Love to the Ways and People of God, and some Delight in holy Duties, and was fearful of Sin, especially of Lying and Stealing, and playing upon the Sabbath-Day. I delighted to read the Word of God, and good Books to others, but I did not apply it to my self; as when I read that Scripture, that *except we repent, we shall all perish; Except we are born again, we cannot see the Kingdom of God: That the wicked shall be turned into Hell, &c.* I thought these did not concern me, because I was guilty of no gross Sin; I reckon'd my Condition was good, and I was ready to pity others; but I was not sensible of the Corruption and Defilement of my Nature: I did not see the need of a Change, I was not sensible of my undone Condition without Christ; I saw not his Excellency, nor had any Desires after him; I knew not upon what Terms I must take him, if I would be saved.

As to the outward Duties of Religion, I lived in the performance of many of them; but as for the more inward and spiritual Duties of Christianity, such as Self-examination, Meditation, Self-denial, mourning;

mourning for Sin, and watching over my Thoughts, Words and Actions, strict Observation of the Lord's-Day, &c. to these I was altogether a Stranger. Thus I went on in Rebellion against God, having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power: And if God had then cut me off in my Unregeneracy, certainly Hell-fire must have been my Portion. He might have sworn in his Wrath that I should never enter into his Rest. O the wonderful Patience and Forbearance of the Lord towards such a sinful Creature! It is a Miracle of Mercy, I am yet on this side the Grave and Hell! It is of the Lord's Mercy that I am spared so long, and that he gives me space to repent; that he should afford me the Means of Grace, and send his holy Spirit to strive with me, and give me many Convictions, and all to reclaim me, and bring me home to himself! And that he should not only give me space to repent, but an Heart to repent! That he should not only stand waiting, and knocking at the Door of my Heart so many Years, calling on me to repent, but that he should give me the Grace of Repentance! This is undeserved Love and distinguishing Mercy: For I was dead in Trespases and Sins, and had nothing but my Misery to move his Compassion. I
walked

walked according to the course of this World, I was insensible of my Danger, tho ready to drop into Hell every moment: And I should certainly have perished, had not the Lord been pleased to open my Eyes, and to pluck me as a Fire-brand out of the burning, and set me in the way to Heaven; for which I can never sufficiently adore, and praise his glorious Grace in Christ to me a vile sinful Creature.

Great was his Mercy towards me, for he hath delivered my Soul from the lowest Hell; which makes me say with *David*, *Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul*, and the Way and Means whereby he was pleased to work upon my Heart. The manner of my *Conversion*, which I hope is true and real, is as follows.

It pleased the Lord by a sad Providence, viz. the Sickneſs at *London*, to bring my Unkle *Gearing* and his Family from thence to my Father's House, where they continued about half a Year. My Unkle being a good Man, I could not but take notice of his strict and circumspect Walking, and was much affected with it: And I began to think, surely the Way that I am in will never bring me to Heaven; I thought I must live another manner

ner of Life, if ever I would be saved. I had many *Convictions*, but there I stayed, but went no further; I kept on in my former careless course. When it pleased God to put a stop to the Plague at *London*, my *Uncle* returned with his Family; and I went with him, and continued at his House about two Months; in which time it pleased the Lord to follow me with new *Convictions*; partly by the good Example of my *Uncle*, partly by many excellent Sermons, which I heard when I was there; so that I began in good earnest to look after the Salvation of my Soul, and to say with the Goaler, *What must I do to be saved?*

I began to be very desirous to hear the Word, I took all opportunities to hear, and gave Attention to what was preached after another manner than I was wont to do, and laboured to make Application of it to my self. I heard Mr. *Vincent* preach upon *Heb. 12. 14. Follow Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord*: urging the necessity of it, as the only way to Heaven. I was much affected therewith, and began to think I must set about the Work of a thorow Repentance. I began to be sensible of my Original Corruption, and that I had been guilty of thousands of actual Sins: Those which before I counted small,

I now look'd upon as great ; and upon my self, by reason of Sin, to be in a lamentable Condition. I knew not how to get out of this sinful miserable State : and the Lord was pleased to shew me that there was no Name under Heaven by which I could be saved, but only by *Jesus Christ* : I thought, if I could have an Interest in *Him*, and his Favour, I should be saved ; but I feared God would not thus have Mercy upon me, because I had gone on so long in Sin.

I heard an excellent Sermon upon *Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you Rest* : Proving, *first*, that Sin is a Burden : And *secondly*, that burdened Sinners are invited to come to Christ ; and then that those that come to him, shall find Rest for their Souls. This was a sutable word to my Soul, I was much affected in the hearing of it ; for I felt Sin to be a Burden to my Conscience, and I would fain have Rest to my Soul. I was sensible of my want of *Jesus Christ*, and of the absolute necessity to be interested in him ; I began to see his Worth and Excellency, as the chiefest of ten thousand, altogether lovely. And then, and not till then, I had Hungerings and Thirstings after him ; so that I could say, *None but Christ, give me Christ or else I die.*

Thus

Thus it pleased the Lord by his Spirit to work upon my Heart, by degrees to open mine Eyes, and to let in some Spiritual Light into my Understanding, which was *dark* before; and to give some Spiritual Life to my Affections, which were *dead* before. But O the Enemies that did then labour to hinder my Conversion, and stop this Work! *The World*, by Allurements and Discouragements, sought to keep me off from Christ: *My own deceitful Heart* and corrupt Disposition within me, were no small Enemy and Hinderance to the Work of Grace in my Soul. *The Devil*, the great Adversary of God's Glory and our Happiness, came like a roaring Lion ready to devour me; so that I had certainly been foiled, if God by his Omnipotent Grace had not supported and delivered me. When Satan saw me first set my Face towards Heaven, he employ'd all his Skill and Diligence to hinder it. Formerly he had told me I needed *not Repent*, because I was not guilty of gross Sins; but now he saw that I was sensible of my Vileness and Sinfulness by Nature and Life, he saw that Sin was my Burden, and that I was convinced that I must Repent or perish, he left off this Temptation, and told me *it was too soon to Repent yet*, that I was young, and might live
many

many Years, and take my Pleasure; that I might Repent when I was old, or upon a sick Bed. To that end he suggested to me, that the Life of a Christian was a sad uncomfortable Life; that if I entered upon this Course, I must bid farewell to all Mirth and Pleasure, and spend my Days in Sorrow. But then I began to think with my self, that it was better to do so, than lie down in Hell-Torments to all Eternity.

When Satan saw that he could not prevail in this Temptation, he found out another; he went about to persuade me, that if I began to walk in the Ways of God, and did hold out a little way, it was a thousand to one if I held out to the end; *I should certainly fall away, and turn Apostate*: And this was the worst Condition of all, to return with the Dog to the Vomit, &c. He brings that Scripture to my mind, *If after we have escaped the Pollutions of the World, we are again entangled therein, the latter end is worse than the beginning*: for it had been better not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after we have known it to turn from it. He followed me with this Temptation, but it pleased God by his Spirit to enable me in some measure to resist it and repel it: for I was persuaded, if God had begun a good Work of Grace
in

in me, he was able to carry it on, and to keep me from falling away, tho at that time I was not acquainted with those Scriptures that prove *the Perseverance of the Saints*. Thus was I troubled and tossed with various Temptations, and no sooner rid of one, but another came.

I heard a Sermon upon *Matth. 13. 45. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a Merchant-man, seeking goodly Pearl: Who when he had found one of great Price, went and sold all that he had to buy it.* I received much Light and Comfort from this Sermon, and saw more of the transcendent Excellency of *Jesus Christ*, who was *the Pearl of Price*, and I thought I could most willingly part with all, even Life it self for him.

Then he tempted me to *question the Truth of the Holy Scriptures*, and I was put upon it to prove them to be the Word of God. This I was not able to do, therefore this Temptation was the longer upon me, and I was much perplexed about it: And had the Devil prevailed with this, he needed not have followed me with any other Temptation.

When this was a little over, he came like a roaring Lion ready to devour me, not as an Angel of Light; but shewing himself in his own Colours like a *Devil*, he assaulted me with the *most Horrid, Atheistical*
and

and Blasphemous Temptations, that were possible for him to invent. He struck deep, and went about to destroy the Foundation of all Religion: He tempted me to that which I am ashamed to think of, and even tremble to mention, even to believe there was *no God nor Devil, Heaven nor Hell*: Tho I did not believe his Temptation, nor willingly entertain it, yet could I by no means be rid of it; it came very strong upon me, followed me from Bed to Board; and tho I was terrified with the thoughts of it, I could not put it out of my Mind, and I was in great perplexity of Spirit: But the Lord was pleased secretly to preserve me, and support me under these grievous Assaults, and in some measure to repel them. But behold the Policy of Satan! tho *this Temptation* did not prevail, it made way for *Another*, which presently followed: For he who had tempted me to have such horrid Atheistical Thoughts, now began to terrify me for them; he set Sin before me in its Aggravations, and told me, that now I was worse than the very Devils, for they believe that there is a God, and tremble; therefore I then thought I should certainly be damned, that I was past all hopes of Salvation; I looked upon my self as ripe for Damnation, and ready for Hell-Torments. He had

92 *The Character and Trial*

had often told me, it was *too soon to Repent*, now he told me it was *too late*. Many Scripture-Threatnings were brought to my Mind that did exceedingly terrify me, as that in *Isaiah*, *There is no Peace, saith my God, to the Wicked*. And that *the Wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God*, as I knew I had done of a long time. Likewise *Psal.* 50.22. and *Prov.* 1.24. to the end. When I went about to read the Scripture, then that place came to my Mind, *What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or to take my Covenant into thy Mouth?* *Psal.* 50. 16. When I had thoughts of praying to the Lord for Grace, that Scripture came fresh into my Mind, *The Prayer of the Wicked is an Abomination*. These, with many other Scriptures, did afright and terrify me, I knew not what to do. I saw my self utterly undone without an Interest in Christ, and yet I durst not lay hold on him for Salvation.

I cannot express the Sorrows of my Mind under these strong Convictions, and various Temptations. My Heart was filled with Horror and Terror Day and Night for some Weeks together. O the depth of Satan's Wiles! He that had led me along all my Days in *Presumption*, now he went about to drive me to *Despair*.

How

How hard a thing is it to keep between these two Extreame! Had not God upheld me by his Power and Mercy, I had certainly been dashed in pieces between these two Rocks.

Satan has tempted me to think I had committed *the Sin against the Holy Ghost*, by my atheistical and blasphemous Thoughts, and because I sinned against so much Light. This was a great and sore Trouble to me, and an heavy Burden upon my Conscience. This Scripture did much terrify me, *Repentance is hid from thine Eyes*; and another, *He that believeth not, is condemned already, and the Wrath of God abideth on him*. I looked upon all the Threatnings as spoken to me; every thing added to my Sorrow. When I read *the Promises*, they administred no Comfort to me, but rather Terror, because I thought I had no right to them, or to those things they assured us of. When I heard of *the Joys of Heaven*, and of the Glory of it, it increased my Trouble, to think there should be so much Happiness, and I have no share in it, but must be banished from God and Happiness for ever. And when I thought of *the Torments of Hell*, the Fire that must never go out, and the Worm that shall never die; this I looked upon as the due desert of my Sins, and as my Portion.

I had renounced all my own Righteousness, I could see nothing in my self but what deserved Hell; I wondred at the Patience of God to me, I could justify him tho he should damn me. I thought my self unworthy to eat, or drink, or breathe, or tread upon the Earth: I looked every day when God would glorify himself in my Damnation; but this I kept to my self: Tho others could not but take notice of the Sadness of my Spirit, and wondred at it; yet I did not tell any how it was with me. My Heart was very full, and I longed to vent it, but I knew not how. *To God* I durst not go, being conscious of my own Vileness. I was ashamed to make known my Condition *to Man*, it was so bad; I thought none ever had such blasphemous Thoughts as I had. I wished some of the Saints did know my Condition, that they might direct me, and pray for me; but I could not tell to whom to apply my self.

Thus was I in Perplexity, tossed to and fro, and not comforted. And tho the Lord was pleased to uphold me, and keep me from falling into the Pit of *Despair*, yet I was very near it. I was encompassed about with so many and great Temptations, and they came so strong upon me, that I could not hold out any longer to conceal

conceal my Trouble : Then the Lord put it into my Mind to acquaint my Unkle *Gearing* with my sad Condition ; but the Devil endeavoured all he could to hinder it, by perswading me that it was a foolish thing, to declare my Wickedness to one that was so holy ; that I should but purchase his ill Opinion of me, and cause him to hate and abhor me, and do my self no good at all by telling him of it : Yet still I had a desire to do it, and I had no Rest in my Spirit till I had done it. But sometimes I wanted an opportunity, and sometimes when I would have spoken, I could not. But at last a fit opportunity was presented upon a Sabbath-Day Night, all being in Bed except my Unkle and my self. I was resolved to open my Heart freely to him.

When I began to speak, my Mouth was as it were stopped, but with trembling I forced my self to speak, and made known my sad Condition. I told him what grievous Blasphemous Thoughts I had, and that I was afraid I had committed *the Sin against the Holy Ghost*, and thought therefore I should certainly be damned, and had no hopes of Salvation ; but I desired his Prayers for me, and his Advice in a Matter of such Consequence. It pleased the Lord to affect his Heart with my Condition.

tion. He told me it was not my Sin to be tempted, if I did not yield to the Temptation : And therefore it should not drive me to despair of God's Mercy. He said it was a sign I had not committed the Sin against the Holy Ghost, because I was afraid I had committed it. He spoke much of the gracious Nature of God, and of his Willingness to save Sinners ; and, as I remember, he told me of many and great Sinners in Scripture, to whom God had shewed Mercy, as *Manasseh*, and *Mary Magdalen*, and *the Thief upon the Cross*. He also directed me to many sweet Promises in Scripture ; but that especially which is never to be forgotten, *Ezek. 36. 25, 26. Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and you shall be clean ; from all your Filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you. A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, &c.* He told me every one might lay hold on this Promise. When he read these Scriptures to me, my Heart rejoiced, and I began to hope God would pardon me, and give me a new Heart, and cause me to walk in his Ways. He also gave me very good Counsel, particularly to be constant in the Excellent Duty of *secret Prayer*, and told me the great Benefit I should find thereby, &c.

Now

Now having made known my Condition, and declared my Trouble, and hearing these gracious Promises to poor Sinners, I found some Ease and Satisfaction in my Mind, and the beginning of Comfort in my Soul. I resolved to put these Duties in practice, secret Prayer, Self-examination, Meditation, &c. But I was altogether a Stranger to these inward Heart-Duties, I knew not how to perform them as I ought. How many times have I kneeled down to pray, and knew not what to say, but wanted not Sighs and Tears? And so my Necessity and the sense of my Vileness, my earnest Desires after Christ and his Grace, put words into my Mouth. Tho my Duties were miserably lame and defective, yet they were performed with much Earnestness and Importunity, and I think I may say *in Sincerity*; surely then my Heart was in every Word, and in every Duty; I did not then dally with God, I was in good earnest for my Soul; and that Promise was comfortable to me, *If there be first a willing Mind, it is accepted with God, &c.* I found that Scripture made good to me, *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.* And that in *Isa. 42. 16.* *I will bring the Blind by the way that they knew not; I will make Darkness Light before them, and*
F crooked

98 *The Character and Trial*

crooked things straight: These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them, saith the Lord. These, and such Scriptures were sweet, and I began to search the Bible to find them: And when the Lord was pleased to set them home upon my Heart, they were as Cordials many times to my fainting Soul.

But tho I had some Comfort and Support, yet was I not free from Temptations and Trouble of Mind. My spiritual Enemies strove hard to hinder my Godly Course, and turn me from it, had not the Lord been stronger than they. My Sin was a heavy Burden to me, and I had earnest Desires after Christ; yet I found it very hard to believe. Satan laboured to perswade me, that *I was not elected to Salvation*; and therefore, whatever I did, I should never be saved. This was no small Trouble to my Spirit; but it pleased the Lord to direct me to a Book, in which I found much Satisfaction concerning this matter.

Then Satan told me, *He that believeth not, should be damned*; and therefore because I was full of Unbelief and Doubting, I was condemned already. But when I was in great Trouble about this, it pleased the Lord to cast in this Scripture, *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny*

deny himself. This did very much support me, and so did these following Promises, which I had not taken notice of before, nor applied to my self, *Isa.* 55. 1. and all this Chapter; and *Mat.* 11. 28. *Joh.* 7. 37. *Rev.* 22. 17. *Joh.* 3. 16. *Mat.* 7. 7. *Psal.* 30. 18. *Joh.* 16. 24. *Psal.* 84. 11. *Isa.* 40. 27. *Psal.* 27. 14. *Lament.* 3. 24, 25, 26. *Psal.* 147. 11. *Psal.* 26. 3, 4. *Isa.* 50. 10. *Isa.* 41. 10. *Isa.* 43. 24, 25. *Isa.* 44. 22. 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. *Mark* 1. 18, 19. *Rom.* 6. 14. *Ezek.* 34. 6. *Psal.* 103. 8, 9. *Joh.* 17. 9. *Prov.* 4. 18. *Phil.* 1. 6. *Joh.* 10. 7. *Rom.* 16. 20. *Heb.* 4. 15.

These Promises, with many more, was the Lord pleased to give me in the time of my Distress and Trouble of Spirit, and I found them reviving Cordials. O how welcome was a Promise to me! When I have been ready to despair and to give up all for lost, and had nothing to support me; then did I take the Bible into my hand, and desire God to direct some suitable Promise to me; and opening the Bible, the first place I have cast mine Eye upon hath often been a precious and suitable Promise, and hath been set home with such Power as wonderfully to comfort me.

Once, being under great Fear and Terror, I opened the Bible, and the first

place I fixed my Eye upon was, *Isa. 54. 4. Fear not, for thou shalt not be confounded, nor put to shame; thou shalt forget the Shame of thy Youth; thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole Earth shall be called: for the Lord hath called thee as a Woman forsaken and grieved in Spirit, &c. for a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great Mercy will I gather thee. In a little Wrath I hid my Face for a moment, but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, &c.* I was wonderfully affected in the reading these Sweet Promises, and took it as a Voice from Heaven to me, because I had desired some such futable Promise.

At another time, being in great Trouble, and fearing I should never hold out, but be overcome by Sin and Satan, I opened my Bible, and the first place I fixed my Eye upon was *Isa. 41. 10. Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the Right-hand of my Righteousness.* I cannot express the Comfort I received by this futable and seasonable Promise.

One Sabbath-Day Night, being still followed with Temptations, full of unbelieving

believing Doubts and Fears ; I was much troubled about it, that I who had received such great Mercies, should have such vain Thoughts, and be so full of Unbelief. Notwithstanding the Experience I had of God's Goodness and Mercy to me, and the Assurance I had before of his Love, I was tempted to think that *I was not elected*, and that therefore all I did was to no purpose, and that I should never be saved. This was a subtil and strong Temptation : Satan did not only labour to drive me off from all Duty, but to weaken my Faith, and bring me to Despair : But the Lord, who had many times before wonderfully rescued me from the roaring Lion, would not suffer me to be foiled by him, but was pleased to present that Scripture to my Eye, *There is no Temptation has taken you but such as is common to Men ; and God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the Temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

At another time being greatly troubled with Unbelief, that place in the Revelations was terrible to me, *The Fearful and Unbelieving shall have their part in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone, which is the second Death.* This made me ex-

ceedingly afraid : I thought if the *Fearful* and *Unbelieving* should perish, then surely I should, because I was so full of Fears, and Doubts and Unbelief. But the Lord did not leave me in this great Strait, he would not suffer me to be overwhelmed with Sorrow, but quickly directed me to a sutable and seasonable Scripture, that was as comfortable as the other was terrible, *2 Tim. 2. 13. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.* This Promise was very sweet, and sutable to my present Condition ; neither did I remember there was such a place before. These, and many of the fore-named Promises were given me in my Trouble and Distress ; and the Lord enabled me by his Spirit to make Application of them to my own Soul for my Consolation. Certainly I may say with *David, I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living.* The Sorrows of Death did compass me about, and the Pains of Hell gat hold upon me, I found Trouble and Sorrow. Then called I upon the Name of the Lord, O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my Soul ! Gracious is the Lord and righteous, yea our God is merciful ; I was brought low, and he helped me. *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.* In the multitude

itude of my Thoughts within me thy Comforts delight my Soul. In the Day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with Strength in my Soul. Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the Voice of my Supplication, the Lord is my Strength and my Song; my Heart trusted in him, and I am helped. If it had not been the Lord who had been on my side, when Satan rose up against me, he had surely swallowed me up. The Lord has called me out of Darkness into his marvelous Light. He hath plucked me as a Fire-brand out of Hell, and set me in the way to Heaven: so that I may say again and again, Great is his Mercy towards me, for he hath delivered my Soul from the lowest Hell.

But O, why is it that I am so little sensible of this great Deliverance! How can I look back upon all this without admiring the free Grace, and undeserved Love of God towards such a worthless Worm as I, who was an Enemy to him, and a Rebel against him, and had nothing in me but what deserved Hell? O that ever the Lord should from Eternity elect and choose me to Salvation through Jesus Christ! That God should pass by thousands, and let them alone to perish in their Sins, and cast a Look of Love upon me, and when I was in my Blood, say

unto me, *Live!* That he should not only give his Son *for me*, but *to me!* That he should take me, with the Prodigal, from the Trough, and with the Beggar from the Dunghil, and make me an Heir of Glory! When I read that Christ's Flock is but a little Flock, and that *strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leads to Life, and few there be that find it*; I cannot but wonder that I should be in that number! And because I cannot sufficiently admire, I will therefore adore my good God. But what Returns should I now make to the Lord for all this Mercy! Of my self I am not able to think a good Thought, it is unlikely then I should make any suitable Return! I have nothing of my own but Sin, and that is God's Enemy which he perfectly hates. I am not my own, for I am bought with a Price: Therefore if I give my self to him, it is but that which was his own before: Yet this will I do, because I have nothing else to give; I will give my Soul and Body to be the Lord's, expecting Acceptance only for the Sake and Merits of Jesus Christ. Surely God requires nothing of me, but what he hath first given to me. All that he requireth, is but the Reflection of his Love back again, when I have had the Comfort of it. O what Thanks
and

and Praise should I render to the Lord, and say with *David*, *Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name! Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits! He forgiveth all thine Iniquities, &c.* Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my God, and I will extol thee: O give Thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his Mercy endureth for ever! For he satisfieth the longing Soul, and filleth the Hungry with good Things. I will bless the Lord at all times, and his Praise shall be continually in my Mouth. I will love the Lord, because he has heard the Voice of my Supplication; because he has inclined his Ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. I will extol thee, my God, O King, I will bless thy Name for ever and ever! I will praise the Lord while I live, I will sing Praise to my God while I have any Being.

And now when I look back upon this, I cannot but rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation; because I hope I have gone through the Pangs of the *New Birth*, and truly enter'd in at the strait Gate, and am now going the narrow Way that leads to *Eternal Life*, which I hope to obtain through the Merits of *Jesus Christ* my Saviour.

And again, when I reflect and look back upon all these things, what cause have I to bewail the Sins of my Youth, and the State of my Unregeneracy, which was spent in Sin and Vanity, and in those things wherein there is no Profit? If God should remember against me the Sins of my Youth, he might write bitter things against me. If I should live the Age of *Methusalah*, and spend all my time in weeping, the Tears of my Life to come were not sufficient to bewail the Sins of my Life past. O what did I lose, when I enjoyed no Communion with God! How much richer might I have been in Grace and Holiness, had I set out in the way to Heaven sooner! But this is my Comfort, tho I did not come in at *the first Hour*, yet I did not stay till *the last*. This was the Lord's Mercy. But my Sins *before Conversion*, are not all the Sins which I have to mourn for, but the Sins which I have been guilty of *since*; and in some measure my Sins are greater *since*, than they were *before*. For I have now sinned against clearer Light, dearer Love, more Manifestations of God's Goodness, more Experience of his Kindness, more Resolutions to obey him, greater Obligations to serve him; so that I am ashamed to think how unthankful my walking hath been, since

since the Lord hath given me some Desires to serve him, some Care to please him, and some Fear to offend him.

When he was pleased first to lift up the Light of his Countenance upon me, and speak Peace to my Soul, after so many Temptations, and Troubles of Conscience; then I did not only serve him with Joy and Thankfulness, but also with Life and Vigor: O how was my Heart affected with Spiritual Things! When I prayed, it was with Sense and Feeling, it was not only in Word, but I poured out my Soul before the Lord. When I heard the Word of God, how did I hear as for my Life, and performed every Duty as for Eternity! I did not look upon Duty meerly as a Task, but accounted it a great Privilege to draw nigh to God in the Ways of his Appointment. I found it was not in vain to seek him, I was even filled with the Admiration of his Love, and the Consolations of the Spirit; and my Heart was enlarged, and ran the Ways of his Commandments with great Delight and Comfort: I could say with the Church, *As the Apple-tree among the Trees of the Wood, so was my Beloved Jesus to my Soul; I sat down under his Shadow with great Delight, and his Fruit was sweet unto my Taste.* I could in some measure say with David,
As

As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God: My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God? O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: My Flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty Land where no Water is. How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord; for a Day in thy Courts is better than a thousand, &c. My Soul waiteth for God, from whom cometh my Salvation. He only is my Rock and my Salvation, he is my Defence, I shall not be greatly moved. In God is my Salvation and my Glory, the Rock of my Strength, and my Refuge is in God. Because thy Loving-kindness is better than Life, my Lips shall praise thee; my Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness, and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips. With my whole Heart have I sought thee, O Lord; let me not wander from thy Commandments. Thou art my Portion, O Lord, I have said I will keep thy Precepts; I will never forget thy Precepts, for with them thou hast quickned me. O how love I thy Law! it is my Meditation all the Day. How sweet is thy Word to my Taste! yea sweeter than Honey to my Mouth; therefore I love thy Commandments above Gold, yea above fine Gold.

Thus

Thus was my Heart filled with Joy, and my Mouth with Praise; and tho my Dwelling was on *Earth*, yet my Conversation was in *Heaven*. I looked upon all things here below with an indifferent Eye; I could in some measure say with *Paul*, *None of these things move me, neither count I my Life dear to my self, so I may finish my Course with Joy*. I was then able to make a spiritual Use of every Providence, and of every Mercy, and of every thing I met with. I found the Assistance of the Holy Spirit to perform Spiritual Duties in a spiritual manner, and helping and directing me to some Duties which I never knew to be my Duty. And tho I cannot say I was wholly free from Temptation, yet I can say, whenever Satan began to set upon me, I was enabled to see that it was a Temptation, and presently to run to Jesus Christ for Succour and Relief, and to apply the Promises unto my Soul; and I quickly found Comfort, and was soon freed from Temptation.

But in this *my Prosperity* I was ready to say, *I shall never be removed*, I began to think I should never be in Adversity; and sometimes I was ready to question whether I was one of God's Children, because I had no Afflictions? I thought God did not love me, because he did not chasten

me;

me; I thought I could bear any thing he should lay upon me. As I valued not *Life*, so I feared not *Death*; I thought I could freely and willingly lay down my *Life* for Christ, if I was called to it. But this joyful, lively, active Frame of Spirit did not long continue; in about a quarter of a Year it began to abate, and I began to be more cold and indifferent in Spiritual Things, and not to be so active and lively as before. This was a great Trouble to me, and made me to question all that was past. I thought I should still have grown better and better, and not worse. Then that Scripture was terrible to me, 2 Pet. 2. 29. *If after they have escaped the Pollutions of the World through the Knowledg of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, their latter End is worse than their Beginning.* And that Scripture, Heb. 6. 4. *It is impossible for those that were once enlightened, and have tasted the good Word of God, &c. if they fall away, to renew them again to Repentance.* Also that Text, Rev. 3. 15, 16. *Because thou art neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my Mouth.* I was much sensible of my Backslidings, fear'd I should turn *Apostate*. Had not that sweet Promise interposed, *I will heal their Backslidings, and love them freely*; I had

had been certainly swallowed up in Despair. Satan, that roaring Lion, came upon me very fiercely; but that Scripture was very comfortable to me, *I will put my Fear into their Hearts, and my Spirit into their inward Parts, and they shall never depart from me. And whom he loveth, he loveth to the end. And he that hath begun a good Work, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. And faithful is he that hath called you, who will also do it.*

These and other Scriptures did support me, but I could not attain to my former lively performance of holy Duties, nor had I that Communion with God in holy Duties as formerly; which was no small Trouble to me, and kept me from rejoicing in God: Yet I cannot say but I had sometimes *Assurance of God's Love*, but not constantly as I had before.

Then, my Grandmother being sick, I went to be with her at my Uncle's House: He being a very good Man, his Company was no small Comfort to me: My Grandmother also being a very pious Woman, was always speaking of what was good. I enjoy'd much of God while I was there; but yet was many times in fear about my Spiritual State, and much troubled with the Temptations of Satan.

After

After I had been there a quarter of a Year, it pleased the Lord to visit me with *the Small Pox*, which was a very fore Disease to me. I was brought so low, as to be given over for dead by most, if not all that saw me; and once they thought I had been actually dead. When I was first sick, I began to be in great fear what would become of me if I should die; but this Cloud was soon blown over, and the Lord was pleased to shine upon me with the Light of his Countenance, and speak Peace to my Conscience: And when I was as weak as I think any could be, and live, yet had I then much inward Joy and Comfort; the Promises were as Cordials to my fainting Spirit. That Promise, *Isa. 41. 10.* did often refresh me, *Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the Right-hand of my Righteousness.* That also *Psal. 73. 25.* *My Flesh and my Heart faileth; but God is the Strength of Heart, and my Portion for ever.* So *Psal. 43. 5.* *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the Health of my Countenance, and my God.* These, and many other Promises, were my Support in the day of my Distress.

I had then such assurance of God's Goodness and Love to me, and of the Pardon of my Sins, and of my Interest in Christ, that *I longed for Death*, and could not bear the thoughts of living any longer. I had such Fore-tastes of Heaven, that I cared not for the Earth: I earnestly desired to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all. I thought if I should live any longer, I should but sin against God, and that I could not glorify him in my Life, as I desired. I thought if he should restore me, I should not be enabled to walk answerably to so great a Mercy. These, and other such Reasons, made me impatient of Life, and long for Death. I was angry with any that prayed for my Life. I now fear that I did sin in being so desirous of Death, and not submitting my Will to the Will of God, to be at his Disposal, whether for Death or Life.

So it pleased the Lord, after a long and tedious Sicknefs, to raise me up from the very Gates of Death: This was looked upon as almost *a Resurrection from the Dead*; for which great Deliverance I can never be sufficiently thankful. And because I so much desired to die, I did not prize my Life, and this Deliverance as I should have done: neither did I render
to

114 *Christian Encouragements*

to the Lord according to the Mercy I received from him. I desire now to be truly thankful to the Lord for all his Mercies, and to shew forth my Thankfulness by walking more closely with him all the Days of my Life.

The following encouraging Considerations among others, were collected by him out of several Books and Sermons, and are printed from his own Papers, in hope of being useful for the Support of others.

I.

THOU that complaineſt of a hard Heart, and ſain wouldſt mourn for thy Sins; to thee I ſay, be not diſcouraged; thy *Hardneſs feared* and felt is not the *Plague* of Hardneſs: It is the *Disease* indeed of the Heart, but it is not the *Curſe*, it ſhall not deſtroy thee. Thou mayſt be comforted under Hardneſs felt and bewailed, and pray'd againſt; true Tenderneſs about Sin is always accompanied with diſlike and hatred againſt Sin, and with watching and ſtriving againſt it:
if

if thou hast so much Tendernefs, blefs God, and be thankful.

II.

There is no Instance can be given of *a Soul utterly forsaken of God, that can mourn for the want of his Presence.* If God's Love be precious to thee, and most desirable, be thankful, it is not *Grace* that is denied thee, but only *Comfort*. She that mourned that her Beloved was gone and had withdrawn himself, was a *Spouse* still; she had an Interest in the Bridegroom, tho she saw him not. Diseases felt in the Soul, seldom prove mortal. Desire after Christ and Sanctification is a sign of no utter Rejection: The Soul that can truly desire Mercy, is not totally excluded Mercy. O let tempted troubled Souls then be comforted!

The blessed God hath a compassionate open Ear to all sensible self-bemoaning Sinners; *Jer. 31. 18. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself; there are none such but shall be heard of God.* They shall be loved of God that loath themselves: They shall be acquitted of God that condemn themselves; his merciful Ear is still open to self-bemoaning Sinners. When once a Sinner comes to *himself*, he is not far from God, *Isa. 40. 27. Why sayest thou,*
O

116 *Christian Encouragements*

O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, *my Way is hid from the Lord, and my Judgment is passed over from my God?* The inward Thought of many sensible Sinners is, that God hath cast them off, and shut his Door of Mercy upon them, and will never concern himself more in their Salvation. Such unkind Thoughts we are apt to have of a good God, when Conscience brings our Sins to a bitter Remembrance. Well now, saith God, *Why sayst thou, O Jacob?* the words are a Reproof for distrust of God. Why dost thou think and speak so unkindly of me, as that I should cast thee out of my Care and Thoughts? *My Way is hid from the Lord:* What is the meaning of that? Why God takes no notice of my Wretchedness to commiserate my Condition, and relieve me; he cares not what becomes of me or my Ways. *And my Way is hid* that he cannot help me, *and my Judgment is passed from my God:* that is, there is a Sentence of Death past on me, there is no escaping; but see how compassionate the Lord speaks, Why dost thou say so, poor Soul! I am not thoughtless and regardless of thee, as thou sayst: *Ver. 28, 29. Hast thou not known and heard, the Everlasting God gives Power to the Faint, and to them that have no Might, increases Strength?* Such as are desponding and hopeless in themselves, God raises

raises them up: They that wait on the Lord shall renew their Strength; God in his time will refresh every weary Soul.

III.

The Covenant of Grace is God's free Offer and Promise of Life and Salvation by Christ to all Sinners that shall believe in him. It is a gracious and firm Obligation, in which God doth make over himself, and all his Goodness in Christ, to all Believers. It is a great matter for God to be our God in special Covenant; when he saith, *I will be your God*, it is as if he should have said, I will bestow my self upon you: what I am, I am for thee; my Spirit, my Comforts, my Son, my Love, my Goodness, my Assistance, my Happiness, it is thine; my Holiness shall make you holy, my Wisdom shall make you wise, my Righteousness shall make you righteous. Whatsoever a God can do for his People, I will do for you; you shall have all things needful for you, all things desirable. All that you can expect from a God, expect it from me; I will be gracious to pass by thy Unworthiness; I will be merciful to pardon thy Sins; I will be Holiness to change thy Nature; I will be Assistance to thee in Duty; I will be Comfort to thee in Trouble; I will

118 *Christian Encouragements*

will be Wisdom to cure thy Folly; I will be Plenty to thy Wants; I will be Strength to thy Weakness; I will give a Blessing to your Estates; I will be Providence as to your Dangers; I will be Preservation as to your Persons; I will be Salvation to your Souls; I will be your Sun and Shield; I will be your Recompence and exceeding great Reward: *I will be a God unto you*; I will be your God, and Guide unto Death, and your Portion for ever. This is for God to be *our God in special Covenant.*

IV.

There may be Faith where there is no Assurance. Remember it, O my Soul, for thy Comfort, and make a right use of it. Thou mayst be *a true Believer*, tho thou art but *a weak Believer*; nay, tho thou art ready to think thy self *no Believer*. It is one thing to have an Interest in Christ and Salvation, and another to know it. It is possible for many a good Christian to trust in God, and believe in Jesus Christ, and yet in time of Deser-tion and Temptation, he may not know it. A Soul under the Eclipse of God's Countenance may think himself in a lost Condition, as *David* did, *I said I am cut off from before thine Eyes*, Psal. 31. 22. but

but it was not so, for God then heard the Voice of his Supplication. A Man may truly fear the Lord, and obey the Voice of his Servants, and yet *may walk in Darkness and see no Light*, Isa. 50. 10. *Sion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me*, Isa. 49. 14. but it was not so. There may be Faith of *Adherence* where there is not Faith of *Evidence*. The Soul may cleave fast to Christ, and say, “*If I perish, I will perish at thy Foot, hoping, waiting, trusting*; tho thou killest me, yet I will trust in thee; tho I know not whether thou lovest me, yet I will endeavour to love thee. There may be Faith without Assurance, otherways true justifying Faith may be lost; for Assurance is with some quite lost, at least for a time; but true Faith cannot be lost; it may decay, but not fail. *I have prayed for thee that thy Faith fail not*, saith Christ to Peter: This Prayer he makes for all Believers. They also that have some Assurance of their Salvation, have it not in the same measure.

There may be a good measure of Assurance, tho not full Assurance. There is a *probable Assurance*, I mean when a Christian, comparing his Heart and Life with the Example of Christ, and Rule of the Word, finds that tho he hath some reason
to

to fear lest he should be an *Hypocrite*, yet he sees more cause to hope than to fear. When after he hath searched himself, made an impartial Trial of himself, he comes to this Conclusion: Though I am not as confident I shall go to Heaven, as I am that there is a Heaven; yet I bless God, I see more ground to hope that my Sins are pardoned, and that I am in a state of Salvation, than to fear it is otherwise. When I reason the case with my Soul, I have more Arguments *for me*, than *against me*, and can say, if I die this moment, it is not only possible but *probable* that I should be saved; this I call a *probable Assurance*. There may be *Doubts* and *Fears* where there is *this Assurance*, because *Doubts* and *Fears* do not always proceed from the Weakness of *Grace*, but sometimes from the Strength of *Temptation*. A Man that hath but a *weak Faith*, if he meet with *no Temptation*, shall scarce know what *doubting* means; and a Man of a *strong Faith* under *strong Temptations*, may not be able to overcome *Fears* and *Doubts*. If *Assurance* did exclude all *Doubts* and *Fears*, then it should be *perfect*; but as our *Faith* and all other *Graces* are imperfect, so is *Assurance* also.

None have *Assurance* at all times, it is like the Weather, sometimes fair, sometimes

times foul ; yea, in the same Day fair in the Morning, and cloudy before Night. *David* had such strong Faith at one time, that he would not fear, tho ten thousand set themselves against him ; he would not fear, tho he should pass through the Valley of the shadow of Death : At another time he was so full of Fear, that he saith he shall one day perish by the Hands of Saul.

V.

We can never have too high, too vast Thoughts of the Goodness of God ; we do not think aright of God, if we do not think him more ready to give, than we are to ask. There is nothing thou canst go to God for, that is according to his Will but he is ten thousand times more ready to bestow than thou art to ask. A Child of God may go to him with as full Confidence of his Love, as a Child to the most tender Parent in the World ; nay much more abundantly : The Blessed Majesty of Heaven is inclined to succour and relieve those that are in Distress and Misery. He that puts Bowels of Compassion and Pity into Man, shall not he himself be much more pitiful and compassionate ? *Exod. 34. 6. He is merciful and gracious, he delights in nothing more than in shewing Mercy.*

You can do nothing more grateful to God, nor please him better, than to plead for Mercy, *Mich.* 7. 18. When thou pleadest for Mercy, thou hast God's Nature pleading the same thing for thee. All the yearning Bowels of the most compassionate Parents in the World are but a meer shadow to the Bowels of God. We may go to God in Confidence of being heard, for Christ's sake only, as if we had never sinned; 'tis wonderful what the Scripture saith of Faith, and Prayer.

VI.

This also may help to sustain and comfort a poor doubting tender Heart, that fears and suspects himself of Hypocrisy, that those *very Fears* of thine are some shew of the contrary. Men naturally love and flatter themselves, but thou loathest thy self for thy Corruptions. Be of good cheer, 'tis Grace and nothing but Grace that complains of Sin: 'Tis Sincerity and nothing else, that discovers and bewails Hypocrisy; especially when thou bewailest Heart-Hypocrisy, and such secret and hidden Sins that only God and thy own Heart do know. If thou livest not in any known Sin, nor in neglect of any known Duty; if thou wouldst find out thy Sin; if there is no Sin thou wouldst have hid

hid from God's Eye, and no Duty thou wouldst have hid from thy own Eye; if there is no Sin but thy Heart is against it, and no Duty but thy Heart is for it, this proves thy *Uprightness*.

VII.

If God never make his Face to shine on thee in this World, yet 'tis thy Duty to trust and cleave to him through Christ. Would you know why God when he hath wrought Grace, doth not enable the Soul presently to perceive it? it may be 'tis that *Sin* may be more *bitter*. If we could have *Comfort* when we would, we should have very slight thoughts of Sin: upon sight of thy Graces possibly thou wouldst be proud; to hide this Pride, God hides our Graces from us. It may be God doth it to prove thy Obedience to him; for to rely on God's Grace, and live by Faith, without sensible Tokens of it, is the purest Act of Obedience that can be. By Assurance we get more *Comfort* to our selves, but by believing we give more *Glory to God*. Therefore saith Christ to *Thomas*, *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

When you have any Evidences of Grace, you must be sure to rest only on Christ, and trust to him. The great Work of a

124 *Christian Encouragements*

Christian in this World is, out of a sense of his Sins and Weaknesses, daily to depend on Christ, looking to Christ, seeing our need of Christ for Pardon, and Sanctification, and Reconciliation every day: This is our great Work. How many search for Grace, and neglect to put forth Acts of Faith on Christ? Alas! Graces are but Tokens from Christ. Let us not forget depending and relying on the Blessed Jesus, tho we have no sight at all of any Grace in our selves.

Where a Person hath any one sign of Grace, he may warrantably conclude all the rest to be there, tho at present he perceive them not. 'Tis the Truth, and not the Measure and Degree of your Grace, you are to conclude your State by. The prizing, and loving, and seeking, and delighting in the Love and Favour of God above all, is a certain Evidence of Grace.

VIII.

The greatest sense of Sin and Guilt should discourage none from coming to God for Mercy through Christ; because the Mercies of God are infinitely more than a Sinner's Provocations are, or can be. O 'tis boundless Mercy! bottomless Mercy! There are many like Sinners as thou art; but there is none like God for
pardoning

pardoning and forgiving Mercy, Mic. 6.18. My Thoughts are not your Thoughts, nor my Ways your Ways: as the Heaven is higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts than your Thoughts, Isa. 55.8. When Conscience is awakened, we are ready to doubt whether God will pardon us; therefore he fetches Arguments from his gracious and merciful Nature. *My Ways are not your Ways;* if you repent, your Sins shall infinitely be out-done: We are apt to think God like our selves; but the Blessed God is of tender Bowels, slow to Wrath, loth to take Vengeance, ready to forgive the greatest Wrong, and receive the Sinner into his Favour upon true *Repentance.* There is, saith God, as vast a difference between my Disposition and Dealing, and yours, as between *Heaven* and *Earth.* Thou that art an awakened convinced Sinner, the Promises of the Gospel belong unto thee; *Isa. 61. 1. The Lord hath anointed me, to preach good Tidings to the Meek, to bind up the Broken-hearted, and to comfort all that mourn.* Canst thou desire to be in a better Case, than those whom Christ hath Commission to take care of? The poor in Spirit, the Mourners for their Sins, those that hunger after Righteousness, not having a drop of Comfort

126 *Christian Encouragements*

from themselves, Christ bleffeth and pronounces Happy. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit*: not one of them would the Lord have kept from coming to him, *Mat. 11. 28. Come to me, All Ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.* Trust to me, you that are troubled in Conscience for Sin, I will bring you to Rest in God's Love and Favour. Be not discouraged, there is a Mediator for thee, whose Worthiness and Righteousness is more satisfactory and pleasing unto God, than all the Sinners Wickedness is injurious and displeasing to him. O this is a very sweet and comfortable Consideration indeed! *There is no such Evil in Sin to damn thee, as there is Merit in Christ's Blood to save thee.*

IX.

To despair of Mercy is a greater Sin than all thy other Sins: This makes thee like the Devil himself. It is the Glory of Divine Grace to triumph over all the Sinners Unworthiness. Resolve therefore I will yet follow God, tho I have offended him; come on me what will, I know he is God and not Man, who can help, nay *will help*, if I come unto him. *Isa. 57. 16. I will not contend for ever, nor be always wrath; for the Spirit would fail before me,*
and

and the Souls that I have made. *Ha. 41.*
 17. When the poor and needy seek Water, and there is none, and their Tongue faileth for Thirst; I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. When it comes to failing, fainting, sinking, dying, then comes Help. Be much in Prayer, and hold on waiting; God may make you seek and wait a long time, ay but he will certainly come, and that will make amends for all.

X.

How shall one be willing to die that hath not a sense of God's Love? I answer; when we can see our Love to God, tho we cannot see God's Love to us. What are the Actings of our Souls towards God, when we can see no Love in his Dispensations towards us? As that good Man under great Afflictions, and Dissatisfaction about the Love of God, at last breaks out, *If I did not love God, why do I follow him, and mourn after him?* If thou lovest God, here is ground of Comfort; thou couldst not love God, if he did not first love thee. It was a memorable Answer of Mr. Dod to a Godly Minister, that said to him a little before his Death, What will you say to me, who am going out of the World, and can find no Comfort? He replied, What

What will you say to our Saviour, that was going out of the World and found no Comfort? but he cried out *My God, my God* still. This Speech much refreshed that Godly Minister. Others of God's Children have wanted sensible Comfort at their Death, yet they have been able to act Faith, and to say *My God, my God* still. Tho God's *sensible Presence* is not still *the same*, yet *his Word and Promise* is; he speaks as comfortably in his Word as ever, he cannot deny his own Word. God sometimes withdraws Comfort that we may prize his Word more, and depend more upon that: You please and honour God most, when you can venture your Souls on his bare Word and Promise. A Faith of Recumbency on Christ in the want of Comfort, doth more honour God than the highest Faith of Assurance.

Why should *Death* be a Terror to them that fear God? none need to fear Death that are escaped from the Dominion of Sin and the Devil. Can you say you do not love Christ, and that you do love Sin? then there is cause enough for Fear; but this were to bely the blessed Spirit: *the Godly hath hope in his Death*: A Hope of Life, even at the Point of Death. A Godly Man's Hope can never fail him, he may want sensible Comfort, but he doth *hope* still.

still. Death, 'tis a going to God; and shall a Godly Man be afraid of going to his God? Again, it is a Sleep, a Rest; are weary Men afraid of their Rest, and of going to sleep? If Death be an Enemy, 'tis a slain Enemy; Christ hath been the Death of Death: and why should that have Terror in it, that hath no Life in it? A Godly Man is a real Gainer by Death: He gains more by his Death, than ever he got all his Life long, viz. Happiness and Joy that shall never end. Again, tho Death separates Relations here, yet Death can never separate the Godly Man's Soul and Body from Christ: Both still continue united unto Christ. They sleep in Jesus, God is still their God, and therefore let not the Saints of God be afraid of Death.

XI.

Psal. 147. 11. *The Lord taketh Pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his Mercy:* Then our Prayers please God, when they are put up to him in Faith and hope of his Mercy. Poor trembling Souls that meditate nothing but Terror, little think how it would please God, to see them to hope in his Mercy. They are conscious to themselves how they have displeased God; but hope in God's Mercy, and he will take Pleasure in thee. They bring
most

most Honour to God that are most admiring and magnifying of his Mercy. His Heart is most set on Mercy, in all the Manifestations of it. Therefore let poor drooping Souls still maintain Hope in the Mercy of God through Christ.

XII.

This is certain, in every Afflictive Providence to Believers, there is more Mercy than Wrath; nay, 'tis all Mercy in the Issue, and not in revengeful Wrath, but Paternal Anger. They have Supports under all; sometimes they may be under Desertion, and no Comforts of God come into their Souls; they are ready to say, *Lord, why casteth thou off my Soul!* but then they have this to support them, they can love God and mourn after his Favour; tho he seems to be gone from them, they can look after him, and long for his Return; and this is such an Effect of Grace, that is more worth than the whole World. *Sustentation*, saith Mr. Baines, I thank God I have, tho *Suavities* I have none: Sicknes, and Sorrow, and Death that are the Fruits of Sin, none can be exempted from; but Grace doth this for Believers: The Curse, the Hurt, the Venom of all is taken away; they are Gainers by all, 2 Cor. 4. 16. *Tho our outward Man, &c.* All works for their good:

good : Others have Comforts with a Curse, but Believers have Crosses with a Blessing. The Guilt of Sin the Grace of God in Christ doth quite take away from all Believers, *Heb. 8. 12.* Pardoning Mercy clears the Soul of Guilt. What Comfort is this to such, that by the Grace of Justification through Christ, they are in God's account Righteous ! And upon the account of Christ their Righteousness, they may come into God's Presence with as Assured Welcome, as *Adam* in Paradise, or the *Angels* now in Heaven. This thou mayst be assured of, that Christ will not *break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax.* Tho thy Faith be so small, that it yields not Light to others, nor Heat to thy own Heart, yet Christ discerns and accepts it. But can a Man have the Exercise of Grace, and not know it ; fear God, and not discern it ? I answer, Yes, some Graces may then be acted, and discerned by others, as well as at any other time. He may fear God as truly and as much as ever, and yet his Grace may not have Light to discover it self to him. It may have a being, and working in the Heart, when it's not clear in thy Apprehension.

XIII.

Hearken unto the Voice of God, O poor, doubting, disconsolate Sinner! Why dost thou pass Sentence against thy self? Thou sayst, O my Sins are very many! Well, but the Mercies of God are far more. O but my Sins are very great! True, but the Mercies of God are far greater. O but my Sins are of long continuance! True, but yet thy Sins are but Sins of Time, his Mercies are the Mercies of Eternity. O but my Sins are greater than you are aware of, they are Crimson, Scarlet Sins! How great are they? Are they as great as the Sins of *Manasseh*, that was a Wizard, that filled *Jerusalem* with Blood, yet God pardoned him? Are they greater than the Sins of *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom were cast seven Devils, and yet God had Mercy for her? O but I fear the Stock of Mercy is quite spent. No, his Mercy endures for ever, it is from everlasting to everlasting. But I have exceedingly abused Mercy! yet remember, that tho thou hast sinned against his Mercy, yet thou hast not sinned above his Mercy; *Isa. 55. 8. My Thoughts are not as your Thoughts, nor my Ways as your Ways; as the Heavens are above the Earth, so are my Thoughts above your Thoughts, and my Ways above your Ways.*

F I N I S.

 MYSEVM
BRITAN

r,
ft
ou
ut
ut
he
ut
e,
his
O
re
ow
he
aat
ar-
the
ere
rcy
rcy
for
ng.
yet
inst
oue
not
ys;
are
my

M
N
E